







# ADVENTUROUS LIVES.

BY  
BERNARD HENRY BECKER,  
AUTHOR OF "SCIENTIFIC LONDON," &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.  
VOL. I.



LONDON ·  
RICHARD BENTLEY AND SON,  
Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty the Queen.  
1878.  
*[All Rights Reserved.]*





## CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

	PAGE
A PRINCIPLES OF THE FIRST EMPIRE . . . . .	1
COUNT SAINT-GERMAIN . . . . .	17
CAGLIOSTRO . . . . .	36
CASANOVA . . . . .	64
COUNT DE BONNEVAL . . . . .	156
JOHN LAW . . . . .	177
WILLIAM CAXTON, PRINTER AND MERCHANT . . . . .	215
OPP MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT . . . . .	266



# ADVENTUROUS LIVES.

---

## A PRINCESS OF THE FIRST EMPIRE.

THE scene is India. The India, neither of Akibar nor of Empress-Queen, but the India which witnessed the sudden leap into power of the strangest government the world has yet seen—that marvellous *imperium in imperio*, which, till within our own time, ruled the empire of Tamerlane from a counting-house in Leadenhall Street. “John Company” is in difficulties just at present, for India holds, not only Warren Hastings, Impey, and Barwell, but Clavering, Monson, and Philip Francis; and there is stern debate in Council as to the very slender measure of justice to be meted out to the nawabs and begums, who are supposed to own groves of that celebrated but long-since-extinct plant, the pagoda tree. Warren Hastings, when he can find a specimen of this rare plant,

devoted of husbands, has a knack of going out to supper with his patron Mr. Barwell, the ally of the governor. His young wife has not the gift of conversation, and he is concerting measures with Mr. Barwell for the defeat of Philip Francis and his schemes. He goes out, one fatal December evening, after bidding his wife a tender farewell after the manner of husbands who love to sup away from home, and joins the party assembled at his patron's house, in high good humour. It is one of the fortnightly suppers of the powerful member of Council, and promises to be a convivial meeting, for his adherents have gathered in great force. But care attends upon one of the guests. As luckless M. Grand takes his seat at the supper-table, one of his native servants, breathless with affright, whispers his master that Mr. Francis has been caught in his house and is now a prisoner, having been secured by his faithful jemadar. The shock is too great for endurance, and the wretched man rushes from the table to the terrace outside and bursts into a flood of tears. Instantly he sends, after the manner of the time, for that "friend" whose services in cases of this kind are indispensable; but is met by an unexpected refusal. The "friend" fears the consequences of being involved in a quarrel with a man of Francis' rank and power, and prays that he may be excused. In despair, the unhappy M. Grand

sends on the servant to acquaint his jemadar of his coming, and sets out alone for his ruined home.

On his way he bethinks him of another friend, a Major Palmer, and resolves to call upon him and request the use of his sword ; his purpose being to release Mr. Francis, to conduct him, after the elegant traditions of the old school, beyond the limits of his domain, and then and there to call upon the offender to approve himself as gallant in the field as in the boudoir. Major Palmer is made of sterner stuff than the first " friend " applied to, and highly approves of this thoroughly gentlemanlike and orthodox way of doing things ; but, on arriving at M. Grand's house, their programme is overthrown by an unlooked-for incident. The porter opens the door at the call of his master, who rushes into his house, and there finds, to his amazement, not Philip Francis, but George Shee, bound to a chair, and endeavouring to obtain his release from the servants, Mr. Shore—afterwards Lord Teignmouth—and a Mr. Arcedeckne joining in the same entreaty. The gentlemen in this ignominious position complain bitterly of having been cruelly ill-treated by M. Grand's jemadar ; but that faithful servant has also a story to tell—how he found Mr. Francis and secured him, when, at the summons of a loud whistle, the three gentlemen in custody scaled the walls of the compound, and, rushing upon him,

rescued their friend, who made his escape, while they were captured by the servants of the household. In reply to M. Grand's interrogatories, the friends of Francis have but a lame story to tell—how they, sleeping at Mr. Ducarel's house over the way, were aroused by the cries of Mr. Francis, and, coming over to prevent his being murdered, were captured by the relentless jemadar and his myrmidons. These small deer are not the game at which the outraged husband is flying, so he orders them to be released, leaving his home in the care of his jemadar, and retires to the house of Major Palmer. Pending the dawn, he writes a letter couched in the ordinary terms, demanding of Francis the reparation usual in such cases, and has not long to await an answer—astounding to those acquainted with the courage of the man who fell desperately wounded under the pistol of Hastings. Mr. Francis coolly informs M. Grand, "that conscious of having done him no injury, and that his challenge is made under a complete mistake, he begs leave to decline the proposed invitation, and that he has the honour to remain," etc.

M. Grand now returns home, sends for his wife's sister and brother-in-law from Chandernagore—in fact, holds a *conseil de famille*, at which it is arranged that Madame Grand shall return to her family, receiving an allowance from her husband.

Then the wife entreats an interview which lasts three hours, makes a full confession, and the unhappy pair part for ever.

For a few years Madame Grand vanishes from the tapestry on which time has already foreshadowed grim figures of Carmagnole dances, guillotines, noyades, and the like, to be presently worked in, with a vengeance, as the grim tricoteuse supplants the dainty brodeuse of the olden time. There are stiff, awkward threads in this new piece of work, in which red takes the place of the prettily assorted colours of the gay old period. As the ghastly figures are being sketched in, we catch a glimpse of Madame Grand—this time at Paris—looking not a whit older; but the glimpse is but fleeting, and we hear little of her until the storm of revolution has swept over France—the pretty figure on the canvas being for awhile eclipsed by more potent entities. But humble organisations are singularly tenacious of life, and Madame Grand turns up in London in 1792, having fled Paris after the massacre of August.

She is a royalist, and employs English sailors to favour the escape of Madame Villemain d'Abbeville, whose evil fortune takes her once more to her country—and the guillotine. Then Madame Grand vanishes again till she reappears on the arm of an aristocrat to the backbone, a man who served king,



republic, directory, consulate, empire, royalty, and constitutional monarchy by turns, but always took especial care to serve Charles Maurice de Talleyrand—sometime Abbé de Périgord, then Bishop of Autun, and afterwards Prince of Benevento—before all nations, governments, and potentates whatsoever. For almost the first time in his life, Talleyrand has been under a cloud. As Abbé de Périgord he had been the delight of the edifying society which surrounded the Dubarry. As Bishop of Autun he had celebrated the famous mass in the Champ de Mars. In the most ticklish crisis of the Republic, when men's heads sat loosely on their shoulders, he was, although nominally second in command to Chauvelin, the ambassador of the French Republic at the English Court.

Dismissed by Robespierre, he crossed and recrossed the Atlantic; but with the fall of Robespierre began negotiating for his return to France, finally achieved for him by Chénier. He reappears in France, and immediately becomes a man of power; and this time the still beautiful Madame Grand figures as Madame de Talleyrand at his pretty house at Montmorency. Under the Directory, people are not particularly strict as to the marriage tie. It is a period of transition. The old has been swept away, and the new has not had time to crystallise. There have, in the general chaos, been "mariages

au tambour," and others even more irregular. General Bonaparte marries Josephine Beauharnais to get the command of the Army of Italy. Terezia Cabarrus marries Citizen Tallien, and registers her children in her own name with a view to finally shaking off Citizen Tallien. Citizen Talleyrand is a bishop, but Madame Grand becomes Citizeness Talleyrand all the same. The condition of France is desperate enough, but there is rare piping and dancing in Paris, where actually during the Reign of Terror dwelt people who did not notice that "anything particular" was going on. The old iniquities have been swept away, and brand-new wickednesses mark the new era—of liberty, equality, and fraternity, carried out by "les gros bataillons." The ancient seigneurs, with their preposterous pretensions and immunities, have disappeared—some plotting beyond the Rhine; others, more patriotic, fighting in the ranks of the republican army; but the place of the petit-maitre has been taken by the "incroyables," the ancient fermiers-généraux are succeeded by the army contractors, and the grande dame has been supplanted by the "merveilleuse." It is the period of classic simplicity—the merveilles lean the head on one side in an affected attitude called the "Grecian lounge," and they have also taken advantage of classical taste to wear as little clothing as possible. Among these shine

conspicuously Madame Tallien ; Josephine Bonaparte, wife of the commander of the Army of Italy, by the grace of Citizen Barras ; Madame Récamier, and Madame Grand, otherwise Talleyrand, a handsome woman still, but well over thirty years.

Verily a delightful society, at once classic and picturesque. These beautiful ladies—not being encumbered by prejudice—are arrayed like unto the lilies of the field. By day they appear on the fashionable promenade in the Palais-Royal in wonderful attire ; their curly heads covered with enormous hats ; their elegant figures buttoned up in coats like those worn by the incroyables ; their taper waists clasped by broad and massive belts. With evening they revert to the antique, even to the extent of wearing sandals over their naked feet. Their Coan robes rather reveal than conceal the small percentage of the figure that they cover. Red, white, and blue are, of course, the popular colours ; but white, relieved by a slight red bell-rope, as it were, round the high waist, is the dress of those who aspire to true classicality. Over the bare arms are immense armlets—a style much affected by Madame Grand, as displaying her handsome limbs to advantage. To-day she has attired herself with more than usual care, for Talleyrand has invited to dinner a celebrated guest—no other than Denon—recently returned from Egypt, whither he had travelled with

the rest of the savants who followed General Bonaparte. M. Denon is an artistic lion of the highest breed, and has come from Upper Egypt saturated with the works of the Pharaohs. Before leaving home in the morning, M. Talleyrand—whose scorn of ignorant women and learned men appears pointedly in this circumstance—tells Madame Grand that Denon is coming. “He is,” says that wicked wit, “a very amiable man, although an author. Now authors love nothing so much as to be questioned about their own works. I will send you his travels to read, so that you may talk to him about them.”

Talleyrand sends a volume from his library, and Madame is delighted with the contents; reads it from end to end, and awaits the interesting guest with extraordinary curiosity. No sooner is the company seated, than Talleyrand, who has posted himself opposite to Madame and Denon, hears his wife begin.

“I cannot express to you the pleasure I have derived from reading your adventures.”

“Madame, you are too good.”

“Not at all, I assure you. Dear me, how horribly dull it must have been for you all alone on a desert island. I was exceedingly interested in it, but”—and here she laughs heartily—“what a droll figure you must have cut with your large sugar-loaf cap and your umbrella. Ah! how droll!”

The savant opens his eyes in amazement.

"Really, Madame, I don't understand——"

But Madame is under way and not to be stopped.

"Ah! yes. I felt for all your troubles. How you must have suffered after your shipwreck."

"But, Madame, I don't know——"

"But then your consolation! How happy you must have been when you found that dear Friday!"

Denon sits aghast, as well he may, for the book Talleyrand had given Madame to read was "Robinson Crusoe!"

When Bonaparte hears this story, he—always so unceremonious in his language as to lead Talleyrand to say, "What a pity it is so great a man has such bad manners"—fastens upon him with the famous inquiry:

"Why have you chosen for your partner such a fool?"

"Because I could not find a greater."

Very shortly after this the Corsican becomes respectable all at once, and insists that Talleyrand, for an ecclesiastic, is leading a scandalous life. Accordingly the poor pope, Pius the Seventh, is persuaded to absolve Talleyrand, first of the excommunication launched against him in 1791, and then of his vows altogether; in fact to secularise him by a brief in regular form. Then Bonaparte, seized

with a match-making mania, insists on all his friends getting properly and legally married. Cambacérés has a narrow escape, and Talleyrand, after a world of trouble with the Mayor of Pierrefitte, near his country house at Epinay, finds a more complaisant mayor in Paris, and is well and duly, but privately, married. Poor Madame Talleyrand is no better off, for she is not allowed to appear at the mushroom court until her husband threatens to resign his post as Minister of Foreign Affairs. Then only that stern moralist, Bonaparte, relents, and consents that the poor woman shall appear once at court on condition that she never attempts to appear there a second time. On the other hand, Talleyrand's mother is so scandalised that she refuses to see her son, and even to receive her allowance at his hands.

Again we meet the figure of Madame Talleyrand. She is older by several years than when we last saw her. Her features show the vulgarisation that beauty of her peculiar class must undergo with advancing years, but she is yet—as Napoleon, who detested her, was compelled to concede—“a very fine woman.” Fine indeed, both in person, costume, and surroundings. The little house at Montmorency and the villa at Epinay no longer suffice for the buxom Juno-like dame who leans against the mantel-piece in an attitude of easy grace. There is no affectation of simplicity in the decorations of her

salon. Everything is rich, sumptuous, and in the latest style, for her keen-witted husband has just sold his old mansion and bought a new one with part of the spoil. The velvet cushions are stiff with gold embroidery; enormous bees sprawl over the carpet; great masses of gold bullion fringe and heavy tassels hang everywhere; the vases on the mantel are in heavy gilt mountings; the shawl that hangs over the wide-straddling chair is rich with the choicest product of Cashmerian looms.

All is rich—rich and golden to the verge of vulgarity—all save the delicious costume of the woman herself. Untaught she may be, but she has a true Frenchwoman's instinct for knowing when she looks well. The low-bodied, high-waisted robe of white Indian muslin hangs in graceful folds, and is absolutely without ornament, save the embroidery of the small train which sweeps the carpet. The handsome hands and arms are bare, and the only jewellery consists of a necklace of immense pearls, with bracelets and earrings to correspond. The "most beautiful hair in the world" is gathered in a mass of curls over the low, broad forehead and thick eyebrows, and a plaited coil gives an elegant finish to the head. Altogether, the costume of Madame la Princesse is a triumph in the art of toning down redundant beauty. She is "looking her very best," and is in high good humour accordingly; but she

has other reason to be pleased, for she expects a visit from the Princess Dolgorouki, whose note she holds in her hand. She is very glad to be on friendly terms with a genuine princess, for she cannot shut her eyes to the truth, that her own serene highness-hood—not admitted save once at the imperial court—is but a pinchbeck affair at the best. At last arrives the genuine “grande dame,” covered with the superb diamonds inherited from Prince Potemkin. Ex-Madame Grand smiles her welcome, although a pang of envious fury is wringing her woman’s heart. She bursts out in admiration of Princess Dolgorouki’s diamonds.

“Oh, Madame, what beautiful diamonds : how happy you must be to possess them !”

“If,” replies the princess graciously, “you expressed a wish to have some like them to M. de Talleyrand, I am sure he would be delighted to make you a present of them.”

“What nonsense you talk !” cries the wife of the sometime Bishop of Autun ; “do you suppose, then, that I have married a pope ?”

Verily, as Napoleon said at St. Helena, “silly and ignorant,” but “a very fine woman,” who receives at her husband’s house the best people in Europe—royal, serene, and other highnesses and transparencies ; till at last the colour fades from the “most beautiful hair in the world,” and the fair



Creole vanishes into the world of shadows, leaving to his solitary old age that wonderful man with brazen forehead and icy heart, who, for all her silliness and ignorance, loved her more than he loved any human being—Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord alone excepted.

## COUNT SAINT-GERMAIN.

FROM the days of Ishmael to those of joint-stock companies, a certain percentage of the human race has filled the rôle of the adventurer—of him whose hand is against every man, and whose life depends upon that precarious patrimony known as his wits. As civilisation has ebbed and flowed, and society put on various shapes and colours, the adventurer, chameleon-like, has known how to adjust his hue to that of surrounding objects. Athens and Rome have left imperishable records of the sycophants and parasites, led-captains and legacy-hunters, who infested the tables of the great—creatures whose existence depended on the luxury and vanity inspired by wealth and culture, destined to extinction in those dour times when a supple knee, an agile wit, and a lying tongue availed little against hard knocks. In the dark ages the adventurer changed his skin, showed his claws openly, and threw off the perfumed garments and the rosy crown, to don the baresark of the Viking, the mail of the robber baron, or the buckskin jerkin of the merry outlaw—

merry enough in himself, doubtless, but hardly the cause of merriment in others. At a later date he put on many disguises, and appeared by turns as a crusader ; as a condottiere ; as a Barbary rover ; as a gentleman of Devon, going forth in his tall ship to trade a little, and to plunder Jack Spaniard as much as possible ; as a reiter or as a lanzknecht ; as a goldseeker in the fabled El Dorado ; as a buccancer in the Spanish Main ; as a trailer of a pike in the Low Countries ; as a gambler, necromancer, and financier by turns ; and at last as a quiet man, attentive to all social observances, and strictly, nay, severely, moral in his outward seeming, but through whose outward covering of fashionable yet sober cut may be descried the more picturesque garments of his predecessors in the world of adventure.

Under the sleek broadcloth of that cleanly-shaven promoter of public companies lurks the Lincoln-green jerkin of Robin Hood ; his stiff white waistcoat recalls the corslet of Bertram R'singham ; the neat boot conceals the upturned slipper of the Sallee renegade ; the spotless wristbands hide Casanova's lace ruffles ; the trim umbrella-cover incloses Captain Kyd's cutlass ; the well-brushed hat has inside it the morion of Hawkwood ; and the neatly-tied cravat overlaps the simpler necktie of stout Johnnie Armstrong !

The last century, among its other merits, had

that of producing a race of swindlers as unlike to their forbears as to their living descendants. These illustrious sharpers were fostered by the peculiar condition of European society; and more particularly by the singular appetite for the marvellous which prevailed, not merely among the million, but in circles renowned for wit, learning, and scepticism. For the fifty or sixty years preceding the destruction of the Bastille the life of European courts was very much after the traditions of the regent Philip of Orleans, who himself had merely brought about a revival of the early days of Louis the Fourteenth. Court life in London presented an odd spectacle. Despite the effulgence of a few great figures, the age was mediocre, even in comparatively happy England; but abroad the curse of mediocrity, incredulity, and extravagance sat heavily on the reigning caste. Venice was in her dotage, and from the politest city in Europe had sunk to be the next dissolute—Rome, perhaps, excepted. Germany was sprinkled over with petty courts, each of which strove to imitate the sublime exemplar of Versailles, if not in splendour, at least in dissipation. Paris—luxurious Paris—piped and danced, recking little of poor Jacques Bonhomme starving in the country, and murmuring, for the time, only a low breath of wailing, shortly to swell into the voice of the hurricane. Brazen beauties and godless abbés

led a merry careless life of intrigues and madrigals, cards and junketings. It was a curious world, this Paris of Louis the Well-beloved. Old faiths had broken up and new ones had not yet begun to take form. Leaguer and Huguenot had been levelled down by Richelieu, and the relics of Catholicism had been melted in the crucible of the encyclopædists. From the king down to his valet de chambre nobody believed steadfastly in anything ; but the want of faith in old doctrines was supplied by an extraordinary credulity so far as the occult sciences were concerned. There was a singular craving for the mystical—the unknown. Fashionable sceptics opened their ears to the mysticism of Swedenborg, Lavater, and St. Martin. It would be absurd to confound these honest enthusiasts with the adventurers who perceived the weak side of then extant human nature. I merely cite their names to indicate the bias of instructed men and women towards new schemes and theories of life. Old-world fancies distilled from the alembics of astrologers met with ready favour. Abracadabra, cabala, the transmutation of metals, and the elixir of life again came to the front, along with Rosicrucian dreams and Egyptian freemasonry.

This peculiar condition of thought was eminently favourable to the advent of the charlatan, who saw his advantage and failed not to profit by it. Of

various type and dubious nationality the charlatan sprang into life all over Europe ; but as vultures spy from afar their loathsome food, and with heavy wing descend upon it, so towards the carcass of the old French monarchy sped a flock of adventurers—jugglers, conjurers, astrologers, charlatans—of every tribe and nation. In Paris, most incredulous and most curious of cities, the birds of prey clustered thickest. Over statesmen and philosophers, ballet-dancers and poets, painters and panders—odd harlequin crowd—rises clearly and distinctly the representative man of the epoch—the charlatan. At the councils of the king and at the board of cabinet ministers crop up strange figures, labelled with stranger titles—the illustrious Count Cagliostro, the dashing Chevalier de Seingalt, and the mysterious Count Saint-Germain.

This famous adventurer is supposed to have been an Hungarian by birth, but the early part of his life was by himself carefully wrapped in mystery. His person and his title alike stimulated curiosity. His age was unknown, and his parentage equally obscure. We catch the first glimpse of him in Paris, a century and a quarter ago, filling the court and the town with his renown. Amazed Paris saw a man—apparently of middle age—a man who lived in magnificent style, who went to dinner-parties, where he ate nothing, but talked incessantly, and

with exceeding brilliancy, on every imaginable topic. His tone was, perhaps, over-trenchant—the tone of a man who knows perfectly what he is talking about. Learned, speaking every civilised language admirably, a great musician, an excellent chemist, he played the part of a prodigy, and played it to perfection. Endowed with extraordinary confidence, or consummate impudence, he not only laid down the law magisterially concerning the present, but spoke without hesitation of events two hundred years old. His anecdotes of remote occurrences were related with extraordinary minuteness. He spoke of scenes at the court of Francis the First as if he had seen them, describing exactly the appearance of the king, imitating his voice, manner, and language—affecting throughout the character of an eye-witness. In like style he edified his audience with pleasant stories of Louis the Fourteenth, and regaled them with vivid descriptions of places and persons. Hardly saying in so many words that he was actually present when the events happened, he yet contrived, by his great graphic power, to convey that impression. Intending to astonish, he succeeded completely. Wild stories were current concerning him. He was reported to be three hundred years old, and to have prolonged his life by the use of a famous elixir. Paris went mad about him. He was questioned constantly about his secret of longevity, and was

marvellously adroit in his replies, denying all power to make old folks young again, but quietly asserting his possession of the secret of arresting decay in the human frame. Diet, he protested, was, with his marvellous elixir, the true secret of long life, and he resolutely refused to eat any food but such as had been specially prepared for him—oatmeal, groats, and the white meat of chickens. On great occasions he drank a little wine, sat up as late as anybody would listen to him, but took extraordinary precautions against the cold. To ladies he gave mysterious cosmetics, to preserve their beauty unimpaired; to men he talked openly of his method of transmuting metals, and of a certain process for melting down a dozen little diamonds into one large stone. These astounding assertions were backed by the possession of apparently unbounded wealth, and a collection of jewels of rare size and beauty.

In endeavouring to tell what is known of this extraordinary man, I think it well to reject as far as possible all evidence of the second-hand or hearsay order, and to confine myself strictly to that of eye-witnesses. Of these, one of the most important is Madame du Hausset, a lady who enjoyed the distinguished honour of being *femme de chambre* to Madame de Pompadour, and was industrious enough to write a book of *Memoirs*, confused in composition and atrocious in spelling, but nevertheless full of



interest for those who "want to know." It must not be supposed that, because she wrote and spelt ill, Madame du Hausset was vulgar, or of base origin; on the contrary, she was a person of condition, spoke, wrote, and spelt like one. In estimating the degree of cultivation achieved by ladies during the last two centuries, it must never be forgotten that the arts of speaking decently and spelling correctly are of modern invention, and by no means too widely distributed even at the present moment. The lady *femme de chambre* appears to have been the *confidante* of her mistress, who, from her boudoir, misruled France and bedevilled the politics of Europe. Madame de Pompadour, highly accomplished as she was, nevertheless protected a private fortune-teller—one Madame Bontemps—who told fortunes by coffee-grounds, and had had the good luck to foretell the disgrace of the Abbé de Bernis. "There came often to see my mistress," says Madame du Hausset, "a man who was at least as astonishing as any sorceress. This was the Count Saint-Germain, who wished it to be believed that he had lived for several centuries. One day, as Madame (de Pompadour) was at her toilet, she said to him before me, 'What sort of a man was Francis the First? That's a king I should have loved.' 'A most amiable man,' said Saint-Germain, and described

his face and general appearance. 'It is a pity he was so given to gallantry. I could have given him a piece of advice that would have saved him from all his misfortunes ; but he would not have followed it, for it seems there is for princes a fatality which closes their ears, that is to say, those of their mind, to the best advice—above all at critical moments.' 'And the constable,' said madame, 'what do you say of him?' 'I cannot say much good or much harm,' replied he. 'Was the court of Francis the First very splendid?' 'Very; but that of his grandson infinitely surpassed it, and in the time of Mary Stuart and Marguerite of Valois it was an enchanted region, the temple of pleasure and wit. The two queens were learned, and made verses it was a pleasure to listen to.' Madame replied, laughing, 'It seems that you have seen all this.' 'I have a good memory,' said he, 'and I have read French history a great deal. Sometimes I amuse myself, not in making believe but in letting believe that I have lived in very ancient times.' 'But, after all, you won't tell your age, and you give yourself out as very old. The Countess Gergy, who was, I believe, fifty years ago ambassadress at Venice, says that she knew you such as you are to-day.' 'It is true, madame, that I knew Madame de Gergy long ago.' 'But according to what she says, you must now be more than a hundred years old.' 'That is

not impossible,' said he, laughing, 'but I admit that it is more possible that this lady, for whom I have infinite respect, talks nonsense.' 'You gave her,' said madame, 'an elixir surprising in its effects; she pretends that for a long while she appeared to be no older than twenty-four. Why should not you give some to the king?' 'Ah ! madame,' said he, with a species of terror, 'I should be mad indeed to take it into my head to give the king an unknown drug.'"

At this interesting point aggravating Madame du Hausset retired to her room "to write down this conversation." "A few days after," she continues, "there was much talk between the king, madame, sundry seigneurs, and the Count of Saint-Germain, concerning the secret he possessed to remove stains from diamonds. The king had a middling-sized diamond brought to him, marked very distinctly. It was weighed, and the king said, 'It is worth six thousand livres, but it would be worth ten without the stain. Will you undertake to make me the richer by four thousand?' The count, a month later, brought back the diamond stainless, wrapped in an asbestos cloth. The king had it weighed, and it nearly drew the full weight. The king sent it secretly to his jeweller by M. de Gontaut ; who brought back nine thousand six hundred livres, but the king got the diamond back and kept

it out of curiosity. The king was non-plussed, and said that Saint-Germain ought to be worth millions if he had the secret of making big diamonds out of little ones. To this he replied neither yes, nor no, but said positively that he could increase the size of pearls, and gave them one of the finest colour."

These latter details were told Madame du Hausset by her mistress. She now resumes the rôle of eyewitness. "I have seen him many times; he appeared about fifty years old, was neither stout nor thin, had a keen bright look, was dressed simply, but with great taste; he wore very handsome diamonds on his fingers as well as on his snuff-box and watch. He came one day, when the court was in full splendour, to see madame, with shoe-buckles and garters of such superb diamonds, that madame thought the king had none so handsome. He went into the antechamber to take them off, in order to show them better and compare them with others. Madame Gontaut, who was there, said they were worth at least two hundred thousand francs. On the same day he carried a snuff-box of immense value, and wore ruby sleeve-buttons of great splendour. Nobody knew how this man became so rich and so remarkable, and the king would not allow him to be sneered at or treated with contempt. He is said to be a natural son of the King of Portugal."

It would appear that the famous count was on very familiar terms not only with the Pompadour but with the king. One day he said, "To esteem mankind one must be neither confessor, minister, nor chief of police." "Nor king," added his most christian majesty. "Ah," said the count, "your majesty observed the fog there was a few days since ; you could not see a yard before you. Kings in general are environed by much thicker fogs, evolved by schemers and faithless ministers." "This," says Madame du Hausset, "I heard myself on the same day that the king compared his Prussian majesty to Julian the Apostate." On another occasion Saint-Germain dropped in with a box full of topazes, emeralds, and rubies. Madame du Hausset could not believe them to be real, and made a sign to her mistress to that effect. Saint-Germain crushed the sceptic at once by giving her a jewelled cross "worth fifteen hundred francs."

Thus far Madame du Hausset, who clearly could not make up her mind concerning the great adventurer, who asked nothing and gave freely. Our next view of him is not in the veiled light of the boudoir, but in the broad glare of the world. Charles Henry Baron Gleichen, coming to Paris in the year 1759, paid a visit to the widow of the Chevalier Lambert. Shortly after his arrival came in a man of middle height, squarely built, dressed

with rich and choice simplicity. He threw his hat and sword on the bed of the mistress of the house, and himself into an arm-chair near the fire, interrupting the conversation by saying to the man who was speaking, "You don't know what you are talking about ; I am the only person able to speak on this subject. I have exhausted it as I have music—having nothing more to learn."

This impertinent personage was no other than Saint-Germain, then in the full confidence of Madame de Pompadour and of the king, who had given him a residence at Chambord to carry out some experiments in dyeing. Meeting him next day at dinner, Baron Gleichen turned the conversation upon Italy, and had the happiness to please the eminent magician, who said, "I have taken a great fancy to you, and will show you a dozen pictures, the like of which you have not seen in Italy." "Actually," says Gleichen, "he almost kept his word, for the pictures he showed me were all stamped either with singularity or perfection, which rendered them more interesting than many first-class works. Above all was a Holy Family by Murillo, equal in beauty to that by Rafaele at Versailles. But he showed me other wonders—a large quantity of jewels and coloured diamonds of extraordinary size and perfection. I thought I beheld the treasures of the Wonderful Lamp. Among other gems were an

opal of monstrous size, and a white sapphire (?) as large as an egg, which, by its brilliancy, dimmed all the stones compared with it. I flatter myself that I am a connoisseur in gems, but I can declare that it was impossible to perceive any reason for doubting the genuineness of these jewels, the more so that they were not mounted." Baron Gleichen was convinced, and quitted him a fervent believer ; and explains the stories about his age very simply, by saying that Saint-Germain adapted his style of narrative to his audience. Talking of remote events to a blockhead, he told him downright that he was present ; but when before a critical audience, conducted himself as he did before Madame de Pompadour. According to Gleichen, the excitement about the popular stories of Saint-Germain was not lessened by the eccentricities of an odd personage called Lord Gower, because he imitated Englishmen very well. Having been employed as a spy in the English army during the Seven Years' War, he was familiar with the art of disguise, and proceeded among the good bourgeois of the Marais to give himself out as Count Saint-Germain. This joker did not stick at trifles. He was not hundreds, but thousands of years old ; had been a friend of Pontius Pilate and his family ; had assisted at the Council of Nice ; and, moreover, possessed a truly rejuvenating elixir, of which it was said that a lady kept

carefully stored away a precious phial, but that her old servant, discovering the secret, took such tremendous doses that she became again a little child! The age of the true Saint-Germain puzzled all his contemporaries. Rameau and Madame de Gergy declare that he looked fifty in 1710; in 1759 he looked barely ten years older either to Gleichen, Madame du Hausset, or other eye-witnesses; and up to the time of his death, in 1783, preserved the appearance of a vigorous sexagenarian.

On the 14th of March, 1760, Kauderbach, then Saxon minister at the Hague, wrote a curious despatch to the home government touching the Count Saint-Germain, who had made his appearance at the Dutch diplomatic capital. Louis the Fifteenth was served, like many more of the same type, by two sets of servants. The Duke de Choiseul was the king's minister of foreign affairs and the very humble servant of the Marchioness Pompadour. Under his rule, the brothers Pâris-Duvernay—great financiers—became absolute sovereigns of the Bank of France, and the national cash-box became nearly empty. In his necessity, the king had recourse to the Maréchal de Bellegarde, whose “*âme damnée*” was none other than Saint-Germain, who had given him the plan and the model of the famous flat boats which were to assure the conquest of England. The Marshal, who was keen enough to see that Choiseul



alone stood between France and a direct treaty with Prussia, based on the ruins of the ancient alliance with Austria, urged the king and Madame de Pompadour to secure the head and arm of the Great Frederick. Saint-Germain ultimately succeeded in persuading them to send him to the Hague, to the Duke Louis of Brunswick, of whom he declared himself the most particular friend. Armed with credentials, the mysterious count set out for the Hague, to conduct a negotiation without the knowledge of the ambassador, M. d'Affry. At first he was very successful, and Kauderbach was, with others, completely captivated by the elegance, amiability, and riches of the mysterious envoy, but he nevertheless proved a nine days' wonder, and no more, for the great adventurer had overshot his mark, and was compelled to bid adieu for ever to Paris, Chambord, Pompadour, etc. Choiseul, instructed by the acute ambassador, D'Affry, easily unravelled the schemes of the occult envoy-extraordinary, and complained to the king, who characteristically disavowed all share in the business, and left Saint-Germain to his fate. Choiseul despatched a courier to D'Affry, who at once demanded of the Grand Pensionary the arrest and extradition of Saint-Germain, who ran a narrow chance of sharing the fate of the Man with the Iron Mask. The Pensionary referred the request to the council of

deputies of the province of Holland, of whom Bentinck was president. This gentleman advised Saint-Germain of his danger, and made him sail for England.

From time to time this strange being appears in various European capitals, under various names—as Marquis of Montferrat; as Count Bellamare, at Venice; Chevalier Schoennig, at Pisa; Chevalier Weldon, at Milan; Count Tzarogy, at Schwalbach; and, as Count Saint-Germain, at Paris; but, after his disaster at the Hague, no longer seems so wealthy as before, and has at times the appearance of seeking his fortune.

At Tournay he is “interviewed” by the renowned Chevalier de Seingalt, who finds him in an Armenian robe and pointed cap, with a long beard descending to his waist, and ivory wand in hand—the complete make-up of a necromancer. • Saint-Germain is surrounded by a legion of bottles, and is occupied in developing the manufacture of hats upon chemical principles. Seingalt being indisposed, the count offers to physic him gratis, to dose him with an elixir which appears to have been ether; but the other refuses, with many polite speeches. It is the scene of the two augurs. Not being allowed to act as a physician, Saint-Germain determines to show his power as an alchemist: takes a twelve-sous piece from the other augur, puts it on

red-hot charcoal, and works with the blowpipe. The piece of money is fused and allowed to cool. "Now," says Saint-Germain, "take your money again." "But it is gold." "Of the purest." Augur number two does not believe in the transmutation, and looks on the whole operation as a trick, but he pockets the piece nevertheless, and finally presents it to the celebrated Marshal Keith, then governor of Neuchâtel.

Again in pursuit of dyeing and other manufacturing schemes, Saint-Germain turned up at St. Petersburg, Dresden, and Milan. Once he got into trouble, and was arrested in a petty town of Piedmont on a protested bill of exchange; but he pulled out a hundred thousand crowns' worth of jewels, paid on the spot, bullied the governor of the town like a pickpocket, and was released with the most respectful excuses.

Very little doubt exists that during one of his residences in Russia, he played an important part in the revolution which placed Catherine the Second on the throne. In support of this view, Baron Gleichen cites the extraordinary attention bestowed on Saint-Germain at Leghorn, in 1770, by Count Alexis Orloff, and a remark made by Prince Gregory Orloff to the Margrave of Anspach during his stay at Nuremberg.

After all, who was he?—the son of a Portuguese

king, or of a Portuguese Jew? or did he, in his old age, tell the truth to his protector and enthusiastic admirer, Prince Charles of Hesse-Cassel? According to the story told his last friend, he was the son of a Prince Rakoczy, of Transylvania, and his first wife a Tékély. He was placed, when an infant, under the protection of the last of the Medici. When he grew up, and heard that his two brothers, sons of the Princess Hesse Rheinfels, or Rothenburg, had received the names of Saint Charles and Saint Elizabeth, he determined to take the name of their holy brother, Sanctus Germanus. What was the truth? One thing alone is certain—that he was a protégé of the last Medici. Prince Charles, who appears to have regretted his death, which happened in 1783, very sincerely, tells us that he fell sick, while pursuing his experiments in colours, at Eckeruförde, and died shortly after, despite the innumerable medicaments prepared by his own private apothecary. Frederick the Great, who, for all his scepticism, took a queer interest in astrologers, said of him, “This is a man who does not die.” Mirabeau adds, epigrammatically, “He was always a careless fellow, and at last, unlike his predecessors, forgot not to die.” What was this man? an eccentric prince, or a successful scoundrel? a devotee of science, a mere schemer, or a strange mixture of all?—a problem, even to himself.

## CAGLIOSTRO.

IN Joseph Balsamo, calling himself the Count Alessandro di Cagliostro, pupil of the sage Althotas, foster child of the Scherif of Mecca, probable son of the last king of Trebizond, named also Acharat and the "unfortunate child of nature," by profession healer of diseases, smoother of wrinkles, friend of the poor and impotent, grand master and founder of the craft of Egyptian freemasonry, necromancer, transmuter of metals, grand cophta, prophet, priest, moralist, and vagabond, we make the acquaintance of a being in whom Mr. Carlyle, after his grim fashion, rejoices, as being no shabby compromise of good and evil, truth and falsehood, but an unmitigated scoundrel, a "Liar of the first magnitude." Not that this conclusion is by any means to be jumped at, for the evidence concerning this strange bird of darkness is puzzling and conflicting in the most extraordinary degree ; and it is difficult, with the extant documents concerning Cagliostro open before one, to decide off-hand that all the evil written of this man is truth, and all the good mere

lies, or the insane ravings of dupes and imbeciles. The information afforded by the said documents is of the most meagre description, and is invariably supplied either by a partisan or an enemy. Lives, memoirs, and letters of Cagliostro to the English people exist, but all bear the same romantic tinge, except only the narrative on which Mr. Carlyle bases his opinion. This is a matter-of-fact little volume, the second edition of which bears date 1791, Paris and Strasbourg, and is entitled, "*Vie de Joseph Balsamo, connu sous le nom de Comte Cagliostro*," extracted from the proceedings instituted against him at Rome in 1790, translated from the original Italian, printed at the Apostolic Chamber, enriched with curious notes and adorned with his portrait. It assumes to come to us through the medium of the Roman Inquisition, and it is supposed that the proofs to substantiate it lie in the Holy Office. Despite all this, the book is of very doubtful authenticity, and at best is, as Mr. Carlyle points out, the work of a reporting familiar of the Inquisition, himself probably something of a liar, reporting lying confessions of one who was "not so much a Liar as a Lie!" In such enigmatic duskiness and thricefolded involution after all inquiries does the matter yet hang." This enigmatical darkness is, if possible, intensified by the Italian version, which I may safely assume to be the original of the

French. This is in the form of letters from a "learned person," residing in Rome during the arrest and trial of the prisoner, to a friend in Venice, where the book was published after being reviewed and approved by Tommaso Mascheroni, Inquisitor-General of the Holy Office at Venice. This "*Corrispondenza Segreta*" commences on the 28th December, 1789, concludes on the 22nd April, 1791, was licensed on the 30th May of the same year, and therefore has every appearance of a genuine work more or less extracted from the evidence brought forward at the trial; but, after all, it has no stronger guarantee than the possible veracity of the "*dotta persona*," "our secret correspondent" at Rome. The portrait affixed to the French version corresponds well with all descriptions of Cagliostro, and presents a man squat of build, broad of shoulder, with a bull-face and neck, and heavy, coarse features, dark tinted, unctuous, with eyes turned upwards with a look of greasy, overfed beatitude. Not only an unlovely countenance, but one which makes the gazer marvel that ever man or woman was imposed upon by this earthly or rather muddy-looking creature, whose animal features are made yet more repulsive by their sanctimonious smirk. How did this being rise high in bemused Europe, and lead a life of high-priesthood, coaches and six, out-riders, liveries at twenty louis d'or

apiece, universal open handedness and benevolence ? How did he become the confidant of cardinals and princes, and learn to count his adoring followers by thousands ? Whence came he ? What was he ?

Concerning his parentage, curious reports were circulated, some holding that he was the offspring of the grand-master of Malta by a Turkish lady, made captive by a Maltese galley ; others, that he was the only surviving son of the Prince of Trebizond, who was massacred by his seditious subjects, while his infant son (Cagliostro) was conveyed by a trusty friend to Medina, where the scherif had the unprejudiced generosity to have him educated in the faith of his Christian parents ! The friend who nurtured the young prince was the sage Althotas, who instructed him betimes in the languages and lore of the East.

In the lifetime, however, of Cagliostro there were many who rejected these fables of Malta and Trebizond, and proclaimed him an Italian Jew. In truth, so far as truth can be arrived at, his name was Giuseppe Balsamo, and he was born at Palermo about 1743. His father was a more or less respectable shopkeeper, named Pietro Balsamo, who, not very long after being blessed with a son, departed this life, leaving his widow Felicita to provide for herself and child as best she might. Giuseppe was favoured with uncles, who, in clumsy, good-natured



fashion, tried to put the young ragamuffin in the right path, by placing him at the seminary of St. Roch, at Palermo, from which institution he ran away several times. At the age of thirteen he was handed over to the Father-General of the Benfratelli, who carried him off to the convent at Cartagirone. There he put on the habit of a novice, and being intrusted to the keeping of the convent apothecary, picked up, by degrees, that slight knowledge of medicine and chemistry which he afterwards turned to account. In these scientific pursuits, however, Giuseppe found but slight consolation for the dulness of monastic life. His natural blackguardism peeped out in many odd ways, and brought upon his broad back many a thrashing. A favourite trick of his was; when ordered to read to the monks while sitting at table, to vary the dulness of the volume in hand by sundry alterations and additions, as they came into his head—thereby giving proof of his natural inventive power. The fast-feeding monks probably gave little heed to what the novice was reading, until one day, while reading out of the Martyrology, he went so far as to substitute for the names of holy women those of the most disreputable females in Palermo. This joke of young Balsamo brought upon him a shower of blows, multitudinous penances, and such mortifications as decided him on showing the Benfratelli a clean pair of heels. He

now tried his hand at drawing and painting, became a practised swordsman, and put his powers of fence very frequently to the proof, by getting up "rows" for the enjoyment of his dissolute patrons and associates. To carry on the war he fabricated false theatre tickets, stole the money and plate of the uncle with whom he lodged; carried letters and messages between his fair cousin and her lover, making the latter pay smartly for his complaisance; and finally insinuated himself into the office of a notary—one of his relations—and found means to falsify a will in favour of a certain Marquis Maurigi, "to the great loss," ejaculates his horrified Inquisitorial biographer, "and injury of a holy house." He was also accused of forging passes for monks, who wanted the "key of the street," and was strongly suspected of having assassinated a reverend canon.

Often arrested and locked up, this slippery customer invariably contrived to escape punishment, but at last fled from Palermo, in bodily fear of a jeweller, whom he had swindled out of sixty gold "ounces," or about thirty pounds sterling. Supple, oily Balsamo had managed to persuade this goldsmith—an avaricious noodle named Marano—that a certain grotto, a little way out in the country, contained an immense treasure, which could be reached only by the employment of magic. Gradually ex-

tracting money from his victim "for preliminary expenses," Balsamo at last set out with him on a dark night to discover the enchanted grotto. Arrived near the supposed treasure, the confederates went through sundry magical performances, uttered incantations, grasped the divining-rod, etc., but no sooner did the wretched goldsmith begin to dig down, than some confederates of Balsamo, dressed like devils, fell upon him, and beat him within an inch of his life. The goldsmith not only complained to the proper authorities, denouncing his tormentor as a sorcerer—an ugly accusation at that time and place—but followed up this by a declaration that he would kill him "at sight."

It was indeed time for our hero to try his hand at bigger game than Palermitan goldsmiths, and to show his conjuring tricks to more important audiences than Sicilian ne'er-do-weels. A natural-born quack, he could not have been born at a more appropriate time. It was the golden age of impostors and gamblers, "quacks simple, and quacks compound."

For a while the Sicilian prospered but moderately. With the money made out of the silly goldsmith he reached Messina, where, according to his own account, he met the sage Althotas, of no particular nationality, but speaking many languages, including Arabic. The probably mythical Althotas, who gave himself out for a great chemist, persuaded Balsamo

to embark with him, and the precious pair travelled about the Greek Archipelago, and at last landed at Alexandria. Here they performed various feats of chemistry, and, among others, "the operation of making, with hemp and flax, stuffs which imitated silk, and made much money." From Alexandria they went to Rhodes, and again profited by their chemical operations. They then proposed to visit Cairo, but contrary winds drove them to Malta, where they remained, working in the laboratory of the Grand-Master Pinto, until, on the death of Althotas, his companion made his way to Naples, with a Knight of Malta, who was also a great amateur of chemistry. After sundry adventures, more or less apocryphal, we find the future Egyptian freemason turning up in Rome, in circumstances calculated to shake any belief one might have had in the lucrative speculations of Althotas. Balsamo was clearly poor enough—to work, almost—but he preferred to sell engravings, washed with Indian ink, as veritable drawings, lodging meanwhile at the sign of the Sun, in the Rotunda. It is rather a puzzle how this miserable fellow, who was not only ugly and dishonest, but poor, contrived to secure a pretty wife, but the fact is undeniable. Lorenza Feliciano was a beautiful damsel, with the slenderest "tocher" imaginable, but yet not altogether dowerless. She was nothing loth to wed bull-necked Balsamo, and

her parents were so overcome by his eloquence, that they not only gave him their daughter but lodged the young couple for several months, until the conduct of Giuseppe towards his wife made a change of apartments necessary. The poor young woman, pretty and simple, was far from comprehending the sublime heights of rascality in which her husband mentally soared. He was tired of being a mere sordid villain, and, with the keen instinct of an inferior animal, felt that his beautiful wife might be made to introduce him to sumptuous palazzi, whence he, Balsamo, on presenting his credentials alone, would be summarily kicked. Like other long-winged birds of prey, however, he was slow at first, and as this early portion of his career is rather revolting than interesting, it may be rapidly passed over. We find him fabricating false notes at Rome and forged letters of recommendation at Bergamo; swindling in confederacy with sham marquises; developing—after degradation unutterable at Barcelona, Madrid, and Lisbon—into the illustrious Marchese Pellegrini, and finally into Count Alessandro Cagliostro; always with the beautiful Countess Seraphina—no longer Lorenza—under his wing. Still only slowly growing into the quack of quacks, the count, none the richer for his rascality up to the year 1772, finds his way, as plain Signor Balsamo, to London, where, after many intrigues, he plants himself on a

Doctor Benemore, on pretence of painting the country house of the aforesaid doctor. Having outraged the hospitality of Benemore, who had rescued him from prison, he finally makes London too hot for him, and departs hurriedly to Paris. Sometime during these early wanderings he makes a visit to Holstein, a pilgrimage to the shrine of the Count Saint-Germain, of whom he may possibly have learnt some curious secrets. Be this as it may, he makes a brilliant figure in Paris, thanks to the patronage of a Monsieur Duplaisir, the nobility and gentry, male and female, and the sale of a certain beautifier of the skin, a restorative water bringing back the outward appearance of youth, smoothing wrinkles, abolishing pimples, and converting a hide like a drum-head into a silky integument tinted with strawberries and cream. This is not all the aid he gives—for ready cash, and plenty of it—to ancient courtiers and ladies of quality. As he restores the outside, so does he revivify the inner man and woman. Cagliostro's refreshing powders, of mysterious herbs, may be bought for a few shillings each; but it is far otherwise with the "Wine of Egypt," the true elixir of youth, capable of transmuting faded gentlemen of *Œil de Bœuf* into brisk young gallants, not merely "arresting decay" à la Saint-Germain, but bringing back again the fire of youth. This treasure brings in much welcome grist to the

Cagliostro mill, for the quack's campaigning expenses are heavy, what with his couriers, his running footmen, his lackeys, his valets de chambre, his cooks and confectioners, and his domestics of all kinds, attired in liveries at "twenty louis apiece." The rooms of his house hard by the barrier are furnished in the latest style ; a magnificent table is open to numerous guests, Cagliostro and wife, poor gentle ill-used Lorenza-Seraphina, are sumptuously attired. My lord is generous, he cures the poor gratis and gives them alms into the bargain. Nevertheless there are murmurs. The twenty louis liveries are not paid for, and the insolent tradespeople complain that they have been swindled. Simple quackery is hardly buoyant enough to float that very crank vessel, the "*Joseph Balsamo*." Stronger measures must be taken. The world holds more than one Marano. Why not bring cabala, abracadabra, and the transmutation of metals to bear ? Why not raise the dead ? Schrepfer has done it in Germany ; why not Balsamo-Pellegrino-Cagliostro in Paris ? The dupes are ready, and only too willing to be plucked !

Two "persons of distinction" fall in the way of quick-eyed Giuseppe. They imagine themselves to be chemists, or, rather, alchemists ; they seek the impossible, and find—a Sicilian vagabond. The count makes them believe that he has the secret

of "augmenting gold," nay, more than that, of making it; and, more precious yet, the science of prolonging life—dearest of all to one "person of distinction," already old. Giuseppe melts a few Spanish pistoles with some other substances in a crucible, and produces a mass of gold much heavier than the pistoles. Apparently much gold is required for preliminary expenses, for the persons of distinction become alarmed and set a watch upon Giuseppe, who slips one evening out of his eyrie by the barrier and flies to Brussels, thence through Germany and Italy to Palermo once more, where he plumps into the arms of the duped goldsmith, and is forthwith laid by the heels in the city goal, on charges of swindling, forgery, and other small matters. Things look very black until Countess Seraphina intervenes, and by her influence with a great lord, who nearly murders the plaintiff's advocate, sets her husband free. He is, however, ordered to quit Palermo, and sets forth again on that curious pilgrimage of his, in the course of which he cannot be said so much to leave one place or to travel to another, as to be forcibly ejected, or kicked from one outraged city after another into space, to shake down or not, as Fortune may favour him. A great transmuter truly of fools and dupes into raging, pursuing furies.

Count and countess presently turn up again at



Malta, driving a brisk trade in beautifying water, preservative pomade, and wine of Egypt, but making more profit out of alchemy and cabala. But three months suffice to suck the Maltese orange dry, and we next find Giuseppe at Naples, where his unquiet feet are permitted to rest for several months, chemistry and cabala again standing him in good stead. Here he finds a chemical monk who rules a chemical merchant, and is in turn completely the dupe of Cagliostro, who waxes fat, but is, at last, saluted with the inevitable chorus, "Move on." Away now to Marseilles, where an ancient dandy supplies funds (ample enough) to purchase ingredients for the philosopher's stone, which is to restore his youth, and enable him to make gold.

Time wears on, but the old gentleman feels no younger, and burns for the moment when Balsamo's magic caldron shall be ready, but his impatience is the marching order for the Sicilian, who tells him that a long, difficult, and costly journey is necessary to find a certain herb, without which no philosopher's stone and no regeneration can be produced. Away drives Giuseppe in a handsome travelling-carriage, well supplied with money; and the cry is, "Ho! for Spain, anywhere, anywhere, over the border!" before the storm bursts. The carriage sold at Barcelona, Balsamo, now Don Thiscio, descends like a vulture upon Valentia and Alicante,

where his Prussian uniform, which he loves above other disguises, fails to protect him from dire disaster and humiliation. But there is no keeping him down. Crushed into kindred mud at Alicante, he crops out at Cadiz, finds another alchemical fanatic, and extracts from him a bill of exchange for a thousand crowns, besides watches and jewels, and board and lodging during his stay in Cadiz. The old, old story repeats itself again. The dupe becomes first impatient, then suspicious, and Cagliostro finally takes his departure for London, where he fares little better than on his previous visit, but takes a step which makes his fortune for several years at least. On this occasion he makes the acquaintance of a certain Miss Fry, and of a Mr., alias Lord, Scott—lottery maniacs after the fashion of 1776. Cagliostro comes at once to the front, bold as brass. He can make gold chemically, he says, but, if they prefer a shorter way, he can pick them out good numbers. He, according to his own version of the story, picks out numbers so well in his lodgings in Whitcomb Street, that Miss Fry wins two thousand pounds, and this lady presents his wife with a diamond necklace (only a little one, this necklace). Nevertheless Miss Fry proclaims herself a loser—robbed of considerable sums, and induced by the arch-quack to buy the diamond necklace, as he possessed the art of “augmenting” diamonds by burying them.

for a considerable time in the earth, where they become soft, and swell, requiring only a pinch of a certain rose-coloured powder to become hard again, and increased in value an hundred-fold. Numerous witnesses attest that they have heard him frequently boast of possessing the science of turning mercury into silver, and of increasing the bulk of gold by various chemical operations, into all of which enter the famous rose-coloured powder. At this, his second English avatar, Giuseppe is not known as Count, but, indifferently, as Captain or Colonel Cagliostro, of the Prussian service. His commission (forged, of course) is open to inspection, and he struts boldly about in his Prussian uniform, which gets him into many scrapes. Finally, his enemies overcome him, hunt him out of one gaol into the other ; lead him, in short, a terrible life ; but, notwithstanding all this, he yet contrives, out of the very slough of despond, in Whitcomb Street, to pluck the talisman which shall convert a mere second-rate gaol-bird into a first-class impostor ; the ugly grub dwelling in filthy mud-heaps into the gaudy wasp, whose buzz shall be heard from one end of Europe to the other, till finally consigned to darkness and impenetrable night.

This talisman is freemasonry, into the ordinary mysteries of which he is initiated during his residence in England. When, exactly, or in what

London lodge is unknown; but the fact is clear enough that Giuseppe is not only an ordinary brother, but one aspiring to reign, to create a new order of masonry specially prepared and "doctored" to suit the palates of Rosicrucians, Illuminati, and the like. To us, writing or thinking barely a hundred years after this wonderful career of Giuseppe, that old world, before the French revolution cleared the atmosphere, appears utterly and completely mad, as mayhap we of this learned and scientific nineteenth century shall appear to the clever fellows of the twentieth. Before, then, pooh-poohing Cagliostro's impudent career as impossible and apocryphal—as it certainly was not—let us glance for a short while at the peculiar phase of insanity which favoured his audacious enterprise.

In treating of the age of Cagliostro, and of the eighteenth century generally, it should never be forgotten that it was peculiarly and especially a period of transition. Science was in its cradle, as yet over-weak for the strangling of serpents. To astronomy still clung odds and ends of astrology; chemistry was very alchemical, and smacked strongly of the Black Art, as its name implies. Herb doctors still gathered their simples under certain aspects of the heavenly bodies. The whole positive knowledge of the period was curiously bemuddled with mystic twaddle, signs, and symbols. Science had not yet

cut loose from the Supernatural, and the effect of new discoveries on old faiths and traditions was to produce a curious social salad, or rather salmagundi; Cavendish and Watt quarrelling over the discovery of the composition of water; Priestley discovering oxygen, and Johnson believing in the Cock-lane ghost. Freemasonry a hundred years ago was a very different organisation from the great brotherhood of to-day, and in Germany, especially, was intimately connected with the Illuminati. At Ingolstadt we find, in 1773, Weisshaupt—a suppressed Jesuit, burning to found a sect of his own, to preach perfectibility and to regenerate the century—goaded into sudden action by an officer named Ecker, who, descending on the neighbourhood, founds a lodge of Freemasons in the next village, and produces immense excitement by alchemy, magic mirrors, and spirits evoked from the shades. Ecker draws after him a crowd of would-be adepts, to the despair of Weisshaupt, who at once launches the opposition society of Illuminati to save the world from masonic superstition. After a while, however, we find Freemasons and Illuminati very good friends, until the formal suppression of the latter short-lived society. While freemasonry is thus for a time intermingled with magic, alchemy, cabala, and abracadabra, what could be a more natural thought to Captain Cagliostro than to graft

his conjuring tricks upon a mystical stem, and bring before the masonic world an entirely new revelation of freemasonry? A name for the new masonry is quickly found. Let it be called Egyptian.

The idea of Egyptian masonry is not Cagliostro's own—he being rather an adaptor than an inventor. He buys from a masonic bookseller the manuscripts of an entirely unknown freemason, one George Colton. Cagliostro sees at once that Colton was possessed with the idea of allying freemasonry with superstition and magic, and seizing upon the notion, he takes advantage of his grade as a “Knight Templar” (it would seem) to launch the new system of Egyptian freemasonry. Manuals of this mysterious and extinct branch of the craft were in existence, when the familiar of the Inquisition penned his curious account. The familiar hardly appears to be prejudiced against Cagliostro as an individual. He merely considers him as a freemason, excommunicated and accursed, and concerns himself not much about minute differences between Egyptian and other masons. So far as can be seen, Egyptian masonry is a curious muddle of the Rosicrucian mystery of fixing the soul in the body, by arresting physical decay, and the doctrine of perfectibility preached by the Illuminati. “In his system he promises his secretaries to conduct them to perfection, by means of physical and moral regeneration ;

to enable them by the former to find the primary matter, or the philosopher's stone, and the acacia which consolidates in man the powers of the most vigorous youth, and renders him immortal; and by the second to procure a pentagon, which restores man to his state of primitive innocence, which he has lost by original sin." This system is referred to Enoch and Elias, and is declared to have been the original masonry—since degenerated into "buffoonery," said Cagliostro, to the horror of the Inquisitorial scribe, who agrees with Clement the Twelfth in thinking all masonry devilish and worthy of death. Both males and females are to be admitted to the Egyptian lodges by the Grand Cophta, to whom almost divine honours are paid. No religion is excluded. Jews, Calvinists, and Lutherans are admitted, as well as Catholics. "He who would obtain moral regeneration—that is to say, primitive innocence—must choose a very high mountain, to which he will give the name of Sinai, and upon its summit will construct a pavilion, divided into three stories, and call it Sion. The upper chamber will be fifteen feet square, with four oval windows on each side, with a single trap-door to enter it by; the second or middle chamber will be perfectly round, without windows, and capable of containing thirteen little beds. A single lamp suspended in the middle will afford the necessary light, and there

will be no furniture but such as is absolutely necessary. The second chamber will be called Ararat—the name of the mountain on which the ark rested—in sign of the repose which is reserved for masons elect of God alone. The first chamber, situate on the ground-floor, will be of the size necessary for a refectory, and there will be in it three cabinets, to hold provisions, vestments, and masonic symbols.” In this retreat, thirteen master masons of Egyptian lodges, having previously gone through all probationary steps, are to shut themselves up for forty days, passing their time in masonic work. After the thirty-third day, they will enjoy the favour of communicating, visibly, with the “seven primitive angels”—corresponding with the seven planets known in Cagliostro’s time—and to know the seal and mark of each of these immortal beings. These signs will be stamped by the angels themselves, upon a lambskin properly purified. On the work being done, on the fortieth day, every master will receive this stamped lambskin or pentagon, on which the primitive angels have graven their monogram and seal. Furnished with this pentacle, the master will be filled with divine fire, and his body will become pure as that of a little child, his insight will be boundless, his power immense; he will no longer aspire to anything but perfect repose, in order to arrive at immortality, and he will be able to say of himself, “I am, that I am.”



Moral regeneration achieved, there remains only physical perfection to be attained, by which the person possessing it may arrive at the spirituality of five thousand five hundred and fifty-seven years, and prolong his life in health and tranquillity until it pleases God to call him into His presence. The aspirant must retire once in every fifty years at the full of the May moon, into the country with a friend, and there, shut within a chamber and an alcove, must undergo for forty days the most austere diet, eating but little of light soup and tender herbs, drinking nothing but distilled water, or rain-water fallen in May. Each repast must commence with water, and finish with a biscuit or a crust of bread. All this would avail little were it not for certain white drops (composition not explained) and grains of primary matter. The effect of the first grain of primary matter is remarkable. "The patient loses all consciousness, goes into convulsions, and, after a violent perspiration, comes to, and is then served with refreshment. The second grain throws the patient into a fever, makes him delirious, and causes the loss of his skin, hair, and teeth. The third throws him into a deep sleep, from which he wakes with a new skin, teeth and hair, thoroughly regenerated."

Before we laugh at this ridiculous twaddle, and at the people who were imposed upon by it, let us

recollect that the ideas expressed in it were none of them new or unfamiliar. To the mystics of that day, no superstition was more common than that the soul could be "fixed in the body" and ultimately "translated" into the next world—death, by proper treatment, being altogether abolished. To the Roman Catholic Church all these doctrines were, of course, abhorrent. Speaking of Egyptian freemasonry, the familiar of the Holy Inquisition says, "The whole breathes impiety, superstition and sacrilege," and resembles "whatever is worst in ordinary masonry," thus giving the regular brotherhood a back-hander in passing.

Having taken his system of Egyptian freemasonry ready-made from George Colton, Giuseppe leaves London and hies him to the Hague, where he is received under the vault of steel, formed by two rows of brethren with crossed swords. His wife—useful Seraphina—officiates as grand mistress, and the count delivers one of those harangues for which he is famous—a compound of all arts and sciences sacred and profane, of not one of which does he really understand anything. But what Giuseppe lacks in knowledge he makes up in impudence, and fees roll in gaily as he moves from town to town, founding Egyptian lodges. During this German tour he stumbles on the greatest adventurer of his or any other day—the celebrated Casanova.

This worthy, to whom all the secrets of Rougecroix are worn-out machinery, bestows his benediction on Cagliostro, and gives him a word of caution, to keep clear of the Holy City—a warning which Giuseppe unluckily disregarded. Great success attends him at Leipzig, and in his honour a banquet is given, at which he fails not to denounce the magical operations of Schrepfer, busy just then in raising the dead. “This man,” says Cagliostro, with magnificent impudence, “will feel the hand of God upon him before a moon has passed away.” Within a month Schrepfer shoots himself; Cagliostro is a prophet, and all things are possible to him. At Mittau the regular masons admit him to their lodges, where he thunders out interminable harangues of senseless trash, accusing the brotherhood of magic, of superstition, of following the abominable Schrepfer, of hankering after Swedenborg, and of a lurking regard for the Jew Falk and other chiefs of the Illuminati. All this must be abolished, saith the unblushing Sicilian, and Egyptian freemasonry set up in its stead. A lodge is founded, and the master at once gives proof of his power; at least, this is what he, Cagliostro, tells the judges at the Roman Inquisition. To a full lodge meeting he brings a little child, the son of a nobleman, and places him on his knees before a table, on which is placed a bottle of pure water, having behind it a few

lighted wax-candles. The hierophant pronounces an exorcism and imposes his hands on the child's head, after which they pray fervently for the success of their work. Cagliostro now tells the child to look into the water-bottle and say what he sees there. The child instantly cries out that he sees a garden. Cagliostro now tells him to pray for a sight of the archangel Michael, and the child first sees "something white," and afterwards an "angelic-looking child of about his own age." The father now asks his little one if he can see his sister, at the moment in a country-house fifteen miles from Mittau. Exorcised and re-exorcised, having the hands of the Venerable once more imposed upon his head, and praying first abundantly, the child looks again at the water, and says that his sister at this moment is coming downstairs and embracing one of his brothers, known to be hundreds of miles away. This is declared to be impossible, but Giuseppe stands to his guns, tells the company they can go themselves and verify the fact, and after allowing them to kiss his hand, closes the lodge with the usual ceremonies. The brethren of the Egyptian lodge fail not to verify the arrival of the supposed distant brother, who had, in fact, turned up suddenly and unexpectedly at home.

This little "coup"—easily enough arranged, like a similar trick played later on in Paris—produces

an immense ebullition in Mittau. Enthusiastic believers prostrate themselves in worship before Giuseppe and Seraphina—surely the oddest prophet and prophetess that foolish people ever selected for adoration. Prophesying right and left, by the mouth sometimes of a little boy—well prompted—or by a young girl, the “niece of an actress, who saw all she was wanted to see,” Cagliostro makes a few lucky shots in first-class fortune-telling, increases his reputation, and lines his pockets at the same time. At St. Petersburg he is a failure. Prince Potemkin, thinking there may be some real science at the bottom of Cagliostro’s quackery and rhodomontade, tries to set him to work out the resolution of some chemical problems. Cagliostro does not like this, talking being much more in his way than working, and after making many promises to transmute metals, etc., he comes down to the composition of a novel kind of pinch-beck for soldiers’ buttons—failing signally therein.

At Warsaw he is successful in founding Egyptian lodges, and employing the pupil or “columb” to look into the water-bottle on grand occasions, but again comes to signal grief over an attempt at transmuting metals. Thence he works his way by Frankfort-on-the-Maine, where he has solemn converse with the Illuminati, to Strasbourg, where he remains for several years, enjoying great wealth and

consideration, thanks to the patronage of that very weak-headed old voluptuary, the Prince Cardinal de Rohan, the purblind, grey-haired adorer of the unfortunate Queen of France. This period may be considered as that of Cagliostro's greatest elevation. Innumerable people, who ought to know better, believe in him thoroughly. Silly old De Rohan can never have enough of his company at Saverne. We must admit that he plays his cards with rare skill. Founding Egyptian lodges one day, the next sees him dispensing medicines to the poor on a magnificent scale, and curing many—so they say. Charles Henry Baron Gleichen pronounces him an excellent physician, never wearies in telling of his marvellous cures, and even goes the length of thinking the snub-nosed, oily-looking impostor good-looking, and of paying a certain respect to his Egyptian freemasonry. This part of Cagliostro's career—in Strasbourg and in Switzerland—is remarkable enough. He is undoubtedly able to heal the sick and feed the hungry—is rich, no one knowing whence his money comes. Is it all a sham, I wonder, this outbreak of benevolence on his part, or has he so often told others that he is the Grand Cophta—the regenerator of mankind, that he has at last come to believe it himself? Is he, after all, fashioned of a species of prophetic clay—rough, coarse, and inferior, it is true, and heavily charged

with impurities, but still the stuff of which leaders of men are made? There must be something remarkable in the man. He is ugly and ignorant, vulgar and tedious, knows no science, can speak no language correctly, but yet leads thousands of his betters by the nose! The Baron de Besenval, a sufficiently acute observer, writing, too, after the affair of the queen's necklace, says of Giuseppe: "He is one of those beings who appear from time to time—unknown persons who pass for adepts, meddling with medicine, alchemy, sometimes with magic—wonderful in themselves, and made more marvellous still by public renown, and who, after having ruined fools, finish their exploits in fetters. What is most singular is, that Count Cagliostro, having all the outward appearance of this kind of people, acted quite differently from them during his residence at Strasbourg and Paris; in fact, never took a sou from anybody. Living honourably enough, he always paid with the greatest exactitude, and gave a great deal away in charity, without anybody ever knowing whence he derived his funds."

The period of Cagliostro's glory was not fated to be lengthy. The unhappy patronage of the Prince Bishop of Strasbourg was the immediate cause of his ruin. Fain would I discourse herein of the famous Diamond Necklace, had not that work been already done in grand graphic English by inap-

proachable Thomas Carlyle, and in full accurate detail by pains-taking Henry Vizetelly. The story is, therefore, too well known to need more than the remark, that the most recent and complete researches fail to convict Cagliostro of any share in the daring conspiracy. Lamotte and his wife (more or less of the House of Valois), Villette, and Leguay d'Oliva (a mere tool), were found guilty at the time, and the cardinal and Cagliostro duly acquitted. Lamotte himself escaped scot-free, carried off all the booty, and lost the proceeds at Newmarket, where he met more than his match. The Grand Cophta was liberated ; but, according to his own account—probable enough—was infamously pillaged by the French police, who seem to have pretty well cleared him out. According to Cagliostro, they must have made a good thing of it : “ Fifteen rouleaux, sealed with my arms, each of them containing fifty double louis d'or ; a money bag, containing one thousand two hundred and thirty-three Roman and Venetian sequins ; twenty-four Spanish quadruples in a rouleau sealed with my seal ; and a green portfolio, containing forty-seven bills on the Caisse d'Escompte of one thousand livres each,” melted away (if they ever existed) to two rouleaux of twenty-five double louis d'or each, and a few jewels.

A great demonstration was made by Cagliostro's followers on his release, but his joy was soon dashed



by a command to leave France ; and once more he was driven to England. In Sloane Street, Knightsbridge, dwelt the great conjurer, and there published his Letter to the English people—cruelly criticised by M. de Morande, editor of the *Courrier de l'Europe*. Cagliostro, on one point, gave a memorable answer to this gentleman, who was pleased to poke fun at a statement made by Cagliostro, in some public place, that in Arabia the Stony people are in the habit of fattening pigs on food mixed with arsenic, whereby the pork becomes, as it were, arsenicated ; the arsenical pigs are then let loose in the woods and are eaten by beasts of prey, who die in consequence. This pleasant custom, not entirely dissimilar from a practice which prevailed in the early days of Tasmania, was agreeably “chaffed” by M. de Morande in the *Courrier de l'Europe*, and defended by Cagliostro in the *Public Advertiser*, under date September 3, 1786, thus : “ In physics and chemistry, Mr. Joker, arguments go for little and sneers for nothing—experience is all. Permit me, then, to propose a little experiment, which will divert the public either at your expense or at mine. I invite you to breakfast for the 9th November next, at nine o'clock in the morning ; you will furnish the wine and the accessories ; I will furnish one dish in my own style—a little sucking-pig, fattened according to my method. Two hours before

breakfast I will present him to you alive, fat and healthy. You will engage to have him killed and cooked, and I will not go near him till the moment when he is put on the table; you shall cut him yourself into four pieces, choose that which attracts you the most, and give me any piece you please. The day after this breakfast one of four things will have happened—either we shall be both dead or both alive, or I shall be dead and you alive, or you dead and I alive. Out of these four chances I give you three, and I bet five thousand guineas that the day after the breakfast you will be dead, and I shall be in good health. You will confess that no fairer offer could be made, and that you must either accept the wager or confess your ignorance, and that you have foolishly and dully cut your jokes upon a subject beyond your knowledge.” This characteristic letter failed to persuade M. de Morande to a pig-breakfast, and he was fain to back out as best he might, getting well laughed at for his pains.

Despite the halo of sham glory acquired in this contest, Giuseppe feels once more, for the third and last time, that the fogs of England disagree with the charlatanic system; that the brutal inhabitants of gloomy Albion have small sympathy with Egyptian pills, vegetable powders, wine of Egypt, and so forth; and that his restless foot must once more take the road—not in excessively splendid style

this time. France, where followers and sympathisers are many, is closed, and is, moreover, weightily concerned over business of its own; but Parisian sympathisers nevertheless convey money to their Grand Cophta, who sets forth in May, 1787, his creditors having become unruly. He remains for some months at Bienne, in Switzerland, where Dame Lorenza-Scraphina shows signs of revolt, but is presently quieted and reduced to submission. By Aix les Bains he travels on to Turin, but is instantly ordered to quit the city. At Roveredo he fares no better; Egyptian freemasonry avails him nought at Trent; at Vicenza he pawns his diamonds. Wherever he places his foot the order comes promptly, "Get up! Away! Out of my dominions in twenty-four hours!" France and Sardinia reject him; England is too hot to hold him. The Prince Bishop of Trent catches a rare wiggling from the Emperor for permitting the outcast to rest in his domain; and the hunted creature is scared from Germany by this dread news. Where shall he rest, whither take shelter from the enemies who spring up at every step? He turns to his wife, poor injured Lorenza, the once innocent girl, whom he had only married to drag through the slough of vicious Europe. Poor Lorenza-Scraphina, unhappy Grand Cophtess, is weary too, and entreats him—not suspecting that her wrongs have converted her into his Nemesis—to

go to Rome, "to her family : among her husband's friends." To Rome then hies Cagliostro—unheeding prophetic Casanova—in the month of May, 1789. Poorer and poorer he becomes; his hand has lost its cunning. He practises medicine, but good fortune has left him. Something must be done ; and desperate Cagliostro strives once more to evoke the phantom of Egyptian freemasonry, under the very shadow of the Vatican—a fatal attempt. On the evening of the 27th December, 1789, he is arrested, and conducted to the Castle of St. Angelo, where, after being told that his wife, also under lock and key, has begun to confess, he supplies the Inquisition with a curious account of his life and misdeeds. He is condemned to death, but the sentence is commuted to perpetual imprisonment in the Castle of Santa Leone, in the Duchy of Urbino, where he lingers till the summer of 1795, when he is found dead in his cell. The unfortunate Grand Cophtess drags out a much longer span, immured in a convent. After once filling Europe with their name, they were both forgotten long before they died ; lost in the turmoil of great events, vanished in the mighty storm which swept over Europe heralding the New Time.

# CASANOVA.

---

## CHAPTER I.

### THE SHADOW OF THE PRISON.

UNLIKE many adventurers, Casanova was of no doubtful origin. Other birds of prey have shown themselves chary of disclosing the cyrie wherein they were hatched, but no such modesty restrained this adventurer "par excellence" from boasting of his pedigree. He was born and bred a free-lance, and took a certain pride in vaunting his buccaneering strain. His remote progenitor, Don Jacopo Casanova, himself a natural son of one Don Francisco, carried off from a convent, the day after she made her vows, Dona Anna Palafox. This event occurred in the year 1428, and the valiant Don Jacopo, who was secretary of King Don Alfonso of Arragon, escaping with the nun to Rome, passed a year in prison, when Pope Martin the Third relieved the lady from her obligations and gave the nuptial

benediction, at the recommendation of Don Juan Casanova, master of the Holy Palace and uncle of Don Jacopo. Of this extraordinary marriage only one child survived, Don Juan Casanova, who, in 1475, married Dona Eleonora Albini, had issue a son, named Marc Antonio, and for a while lived respectably enough.

Blood, however, will tell, and in 1481, Don Juan having killed an officer belonging to the King of Naples, was obliged to show a clean pair of heels to the Eternal City; enlisted under Christopher Columbus, and died in 1493. Marc Antonio found the "pen mightier than the sword," wrote rhymes in the style of the period, and became the secretary of Cardinal Pompeo Colonna. A satire against Giulio de' Medici, then a cardinal, obliged this learned gentleman to leave Rome and retreat to Como, where, to pass the time, he got married. Shortly after, Giulio de' Medici, having become Pope, under the title of Clement the Seventh, recalled him to Rome, where he died of the plague, after Rome was taken and pillaged by the Imperialists in 1526. His son fought through the long wars which desolated France in the sixteenth century, and died there full of years, if not of honour. The grandson of this worthy man seems to have forsaken the sword for the stage, for he became first a dancer and then an actor, and finally married the daughter

of a shoemaker, who in turn became an actress, and nine years after was left a widow with six children, of whom Giacomo Girolamo Casanova, the eldest, was born in 1725.

This descendant of an adventurous line was endowed not only with the mother-wit and readiness of resource, common to those who have rather scratched their names on the edge of society than written them upon its face, but with extraordinary industry, energy, and force of character which, while getting him into many scrapes, enabled him to get out of them in a fashion which, at times, was almost creditable. His mother, travelling as a comedian from one city of Europe to the other, appears to have left her child under the guardianship of a certain Abbé Grimani, who put him out to board at Padua, where he received his first instruction from the Abbé Gozzi, under whose care he, although instructed in the systems of Aristotle and the cosmography of Ptolemy, at which he laughed consumedly, nevertheless imbibed the art of writing Latin and Italian verse; and moreover, acquired a fair knowledge of Greek. Young Casanova could knock off a couplet at the age of eleven, and, continuing his studies at the University of Padua, took the degree of doctor of laws at sixteen. The scholars of this famous university enjoyed extraordinary immunities, and used, or rather abused,

them atrociously. They carried weapons openly, came frequently into collision with the police, and led a life generally which throws the German "renowners" completely into the shade. This career was well suited to Casanova, who to his last day made love and literature, science and gambling, necromancy and duelling, his chief occupations. He often complained of his evil star, but, so far as can be seen, his maleficent planet was made up of his own qualities—a certain mania for being thought a wit, a trenchant and insolent tone, and a burning desire to settle every dispute sword in hand. He was by no means an oily insinuating adventurer, but a dangerous mixture of the wit, schemer, and swash-buckler. He knew excellently well how to ingratiate himself with his victims and to practise on their credulity, but when unmasked his diabolical temper and personal courage forbade him to make a swift and ignominious retreat. He retired slowly, snarling and gnashing his teeth, and those who drove him to bay often found him, to their cost, an ugly customer.

Being endowed with these happy qualifications for a sacred mission, he was destined for the Church, and received the tonsure at the hands of Monsignor Carreri, patriarch of Venice. At the City of the Sea he still pursued his studies, and in his position as a young abbé, under the protection of Signor



Malipiero, an ancient patrician, enjoyed an excellent opportunity of "forming himself in the great world." Doubtless he acquired a certain ceremonious varnish of good manners, but throughout his life the coarse internal structure showed through the cracks with painful distinctness. Allowing for every difference between the manners of the last century and those of our own, Casanova must always appear destitute of thorough good breeding. Stately upon occasion, ceremoniously polite when in a good humour, and brave always, he yet continually betrayed that want of ease which characterises the promoted bravo.

Of a singularly positive turn of mind, the young abbé gave his attention to physics, and neglected no opportunity of acquiring the natural sciences. Meanwhile, he was permitted to preach and gad about in Venice, and getting into a few scrapes, was relegated to a seminary, among a set of "dirty little rascals." Disgusted at this treatment, he conducted himself in such fashion as to be imprisoned in a fort, and on his return to Venice was engaged, as his librarian, by a southern bishop, whom he was to rejoin at Rome.

Setting out from Venice, to reach Rome via Ancona, he went first to Chiozza to take shipping; and got into trouble at once. The young hawk, whose plumage was not yet fully grown, had to pass through the pigeon stage, and was plucked of all his

money by a gang of scapegraces, headed by a one-eyed monk. Without a sequin he went on board, and there picked up the acquaintance of a young Franciscan, thanks to whom he made his way on foot to Loretto, and thence to Rome. Tramping along with the mendicant friar, begging food, lodging gratis, and borrowing money, the young Venetian at last reached the Eternal City, with seven pauls in his pocket, and found that his bishop had gone on to Naples, after franking his follower through. He reached Naples, only to find his master gone to Martorano, in the Terra di Lavoro, some two hundred miles off. This was a long way to walk, and having only eight carlini, Casanova was obliged to draw at sight upon his intelligence—a bank which rarely failed him. Having walked to Portici, he ate a good dinner, slept the slumber of the just, and sauntered out in the morning, seeking whom he should devour. Here a Greek merchant was delivered into his hands. The man sought to sell Muscat wine, and attracted by Casanova's appearance, approached him, telling him that he also had quicksilver to sell. After sundry bargainings and much haggling, the young scamp showed the elder how to "augment" his store of mercury, by adding to it lead and bismuth. Not knowing how the Neapolitans of the period regarded augmentation—i.e., adulteration—I cannot pronounce

on the lawfulness of this trick, but the Greek was glad to buy it for a hundred ounces, and threw a box of silver-mounted razors and a barrel of Muscat into the bargain. Refitting his wardrobe at Salerno, Casanova went on merrily to Martorano, but disgusted by the poverty of the bishop and his diocese, made up his mind to try his fortune in Rome. The excellent bishop supplied him with several letters of introduction and a little money, and after finding at Naples a remote cousin, who gave him more introductions and more money, the young abbé landed at Rome, was received into the household of Cardinal Acquaviva as an assistant secretary, and lived joyously, but devoted several hours daily to the study of French—an indispensable accomplishment for a sucking diplomatist. His knack of verse-making here stood him in good stead. A puissant cardinal employed him in writing his own supposed amatory verses; he was introduced to the Pope, and was apparently on the high road to fortune, when an intrigue in which he was—for a wonder—blameless, compelled him to leave Rome. This unhappy event crushed poor Casanova. He was utterly cast down. To his logical mind it was a double punishment, as he was not consoled by the agreeable consciousness of guilt. He groaned, but was compelled to submit; but, as the cardinal did things handsomely, he was to be sent on a foreign mission. When asked where

he would like to go, he answered at random, "Constantinople." As this city was outside of Christendom, the worthy cardinal was a little puzzled at first, but finally gave him a passport for Venice and a letter addressed to Osman Bonneval, Pacha of Karamania, at Constantinople. Furnished with these documents, he set out for Venice—this time well provided with funds—and after sundry adventures, more or less scandalous, fell like a bomb among his friends in that city. He now decided on throwing off the ecclesiastical habit and becoming a soldier, and purchased an ensigncy in a Venetian regiment stationed at Corfu, reserving to himself sufficient leave to visit the famous Count de Bonneval, a renegade of the good old type. On the voyage he quarrelled with a Slavonic priest, and during a storm narrowly escaped being thrown overboard as a second Jonah, but ultimately landed safely in the Golden Horn. Lodged in the Venetian embassy, he soon made his way to Osman Pacha, otherwise Count de Bonneval, and was well received by that eminent Franco-Turk. As the letter of Cardinal Acquaviva announced Casanova as a man of letters, the pacha rose and said he would show him his library. The stout old Frenchman waddled across the garden and introduced him into a room furnished with iron-trellised bookcases hung with curtains, behind which the books were supposed to

be concealed. Taking a key out of his pocket, the old soldier disclosed, in the place of priceless tomes and rare folios, rows of bottles of the rarest wines. "This," said Bonneval, "is my library and my harem." This very easy-going pacha assured Casanova that his friends in Venice need not make themselves unhappy about his apostasy, and that he was at least as bad a Turk as he had ever been a Christian. "I am sure," said the veteran, "that I shall die as happily as Prince Eugene. I wear the turban, as a soldier is obliged to wear the uniform of his master. I knew only the trade of war, and I only determined to become the lieutenant-general of the Grand Turk when I was unable to live otherwise. When I left Venice the soup had eaten the dish, and if the Jewish nation had offered me the command of fifty thousand men I would have laid siege to Jerusalem."

Thanks to Bonneval, Casanova was introduced into Turkish society, and succeeded in so strongly impressing a certain Yussuf—a man of great wealth and power—with his superior intelligence, that the Turk begged him to remain in the country, marry his daughter, and become his heir; but our Venetian, whose self-esteem was enormous, thought he could do as well among Christians as Turks, and at length took his leave loaded with presents. These he converted into cash at Corfu, to provide funds

for a faro bank, which, in those days, was considered a reputable speculation for a Venetian gentleman—so much so, indeed, that the privilege of faro banking at the Ridotto was confined to patricians only. For a while he was exceedingly successful; but luck turning at last, he became disgusted with a military life, and contrasted the condition of a soldier with that of a galley slave—very much to the advantage of the latter. Suffering from a vein of bad luck, Casanova was additionally irritated by losing his promotion, and on his return to Venice determined to sell his commission. Receiving from the Venetian War Office a hundred sequins in ready money, he determined to become a professional gambler; but Fortune seldom favours a small capital, and our young friend was “cleaned out” in a week. Being now in a desperate strait, he, for once, performed the feat of working for his living, and played the violin in a theatre for a crown a day, which he philosophically thought would suffice him till something better turned up. Thoroughly down in the world, the priest-soldier-fiddler was clever enough to keep out of the way of his grand acquaintances, but consoled himself with the companionship of a set of young scamps, who combined to render night hideous to peaceable Venetians. Brutality apart, they conducted themselves like the Mohocks of London. They unhitched gondolas and let them

float away from their owners ; they woke up priests, doctors, and midwives at midnight, and sent them on sham errands ; they broke down bells, and opened doors, and generally conducted themselves very much in the Waterfordian style.

This life went on for a while ; but a great change was in store for our hero. About the middle of April, 1746, he was performing his functions as a violin-player at the nuptials of Girolamo Cornaro, when, feeling tired, he walked off, and in descending the stairs observed a senator in his scarlet gown getting into his gondola. The worthy patrician, in the act of taking out his handkerchief, let fall a letter which the violinist picked up and handed to him, and was forthwith offered to be "set down" by the gondola of the ancient gentleman. On the way the Signor Bragadino was stricken with apoplexy, and here the curious and varied knowledge of Casanova came in à propos. He stopped the gondola ; sought a surgeon, to bleed the senator ; and conducting him home, was clever enough to establish himself as his nurse. After an illness which lasted many days, and during which Casanova showed himself a good amateur doctor, the old gentleman recovered, and, pronouncing his young friend the saviour of his life, introduced him to all his friends, and notably to his two particular cronies, also patricians.

During the convalescence of this eminent Venetian came the great opportunity of Casanova, which, as a fine natural liar, he did not fail to seize. An old beau, a superannuated man of the world, a godless bigwig, the Signor Bragadino had yet considerable knowledge of such science as existed at the time when astronomy had not quite escaped from the trammels of astrology, and chemistry yet lingered in the arms of alchemy. Cabala and abracadabra were yet familiar words, and the illustrious Signor, overpowered by the learning of Casanova, was inclined to attribute to him supernatural powers. The young man was equal to the occasion. At this period he was certainly no conjurer, but on being taken for one, felt bound to justify the good opinion of his patron, and became a magician malgré lui. Not wishing to disgust the old gentleman by telling him that he was mistaken, he took the wild resolution to tell him, in the presence of his two familiar friends, that he possessed a certain numerical calculation by which, on transposing a certain given question into numerical equivalents, he could obtain answers which informed him concerning things of which he could possess no other possible knowledge. Signor Bragadino said this was the clavicula of Solomon, and asked him where he had found it. Ready invention described a hermit in the mountain Carpegna, as the individual who had communicated



this invaluable secret. The ancient Venetian was delighted, and informed Casanova that his imaginary hermit had united him to an invisible intelligence, as numbers alone could not possess the faculty of reasoning, and added that his protégé ought to make a good thing out of such a valuable gift. Casanova trumped this trick by saying downright that he owed their meeting to the oracle, which had commanded him to leave the ball at a particular hour. He was now called upon to work his oracle, and to ask his familiar spirit, whom he dubbed Paralis, a question or two. The young ci-devant officer—but very “old soldier”—brought his knack of verse-making into play, and worked out some obscure rhymes, which, apparently by good luck, hit the mark. Their three excellencies now put their grey heads together, and requested Casanova to communicate to them his precious secret, but again the greybeards proved no match for their young friend. He told them that nothing would give him greater pleasure than to expose the whole secret to them, but that the hermit had told him—although he, for his part, did not believe it—that he would die suddenly, three days after he communicated his science to any person. This audacious coup was successful, for Signor Bragadino begged him not to run this risk, and it thus fell out that these three old originals “took up” the adventurer. Bragadino adopted him, and had the pleasure

of paying his numerous gambling debts, for the oracle—equal to many things—could not tell the hierophant the right card to back at *faro*. Signor Bragadino also gave him a sage piece of advice: "If you must play, keep the bank. Never play against it. The percentage in your favour appears small, but it is constant. Moreover, the bank has no emotions, while the 'punter' loses his head." This bit of philosophy was thrown away at the time, but in his later career Casanova proved its truth, and failed not to profit largely by it.

For a while he was the spoiled child of Bragadino and Fortune, but having indulged in a few freaks, one of which consisted in frightening a man into insanity—permissible enough in a patrician, but in his case looked glumly upon by the Council of Ten—his adopted father recommended him to try a change of air, as that of the lagoons smelt ominously of the dungeon. Scampering over Italy he enjoyed many adventures, more curious than edifying, and by a species of compensatory action in people of his composition, became, after a fit of illness in Switzerland, excessively devout. Recalled to Venice, he astounded his patrons by his newly-acquired habits of devotion; but their joy at the conversion of the prodigal was not destined to be of long duration. Bit by bit our hero dropped back into his old habits, narrowly escaped trouble in consequence of a breach

of promise of marriage, and made a lucky stroke during the carnival of 1750 by gaining at the lottery a "terne" of three thousand ducats. He had also been fortunate in keeping a faro bank, and feeling himself in funds, did precisely what any nouveau riche would do—made up his mind to visit Paris.

On his road hither, Casanova made a considerable stay at Lyons, was there initiated into the secrets of freemasonry, and got into numerous scrapes by his abrupt manner and his slight knowledge of French. At Paris he found himself among friends—Baletti the dancer, and Silvia, a famous actress of the day—and by degrees became acquainted with the French literati. Crébillon, who had now reached the age of eighty, took a fancy to him, undertook to "coach" him in the French language, and even deigned to listen to his verses. This famous old man of letters was a colossus, considerably over six feet in height, lived well, and talked well, but passed the greater part of his time at home, smoking a pipe—a wonder in those days—and surrounded by a score of pet cats. His house-keeper was not unlike that of Molière, and looked carefully after the wants of the old gentleman, whose face was as the face of a lion. He filled the important office of Censor Royal, and declared that his occupation amused him immensely. His house-

keeper read to him the books submitted, and paused when she came to a passage which to her seemed to require excision. Crébillon, whose opinions and practice were not unduly severe, often differed, and terrible discussions then took place, pending which official opinion was often deferred for a week or two. Crébillon was full of anecdotes of Louis the Fourteenth, and declared that the famous ambassadors from Siam were only "supers" hired to perform the character by Madame de Maintenon—a thoroughly stagy explanation of a curious episode.

At Paris Casanova made the acquaintance of the famous Marshal Duke de Richelieu, the conqueror of Port Mahon, as the French love to call him. This incarnation of all that was bright and brave, witty and wicked in the old French noblesse, and who died just in time to escape seeing his order abolished, was much taken with the Venetian, as was also a far more worthy person, Marshal Keith, an illustrious Scot in the service of the King of Prussia. Going to Fontainebleau he saw the handsome King Louis the Well-beloved, of luxurious memory, going to mass with the royal family, and was astonished at the scarcity of good looks among the great ladies of the court, who appeared to be falling on their noses from the extreme height of their shoe heels, which often attained an altitude of six inches. The queen appeared among this bepainted, bepowdered, and

bepatched bevy of belles without rouge, simply dressed, her head covered with a great cap, looking old and excessively devout. Her Majesty dined alone at a table large enough for a dozen persons, and was served amid a ghostly silence by a couple of nuns.

Casanova found that the fame of his cabala had preceded him in the great city of shams. By an adroit combination of his medical knowledge, which was doubtless considerable, with his cabalistic oracle, and aided somewhat by chance, he succeeded in imposing himself upon the Duchess de Chartres as a great magician. He cured boils and eruptions, and pretended to unveil court intrigues. His patroness, the duchess, was on very friendly terms with the king, who, nevertheless, sometimes took it into his royal head to expend his royal wit upon her. Once he met his match. Madame de Chartres asked him one day if it was true that the King of Prussia was coming to Paris. "No," said the king, "it is only idle gossip." "Ah," replied the duchess, "I am sorry for it, for I am dying to see a king."

Two years of Paris and a duel satisfied Casanova, who then went to Dresden, Prague, and Vienna. At the latter city he found the famous Metastasio; but was dull in a town where the bottle and the pipe took the place of all other pleasures, except gambling, which appears to have been largely patro-

nised. A certain prince-bishop kept a great faro bank, and met all comers in a truly noble spirit. One evening, as his highness was dealing, a Chevalier de Talvis, whom Casanova had fought with in Paris, came up to the table, and the prince-bishop invited him to play. The Frenchman seeing on the table some thirteen or fourteen thousand florins, called out, "The bank on this card." The bishop, not to be frightened, accepted, and went on dealing till Talvis's card won. The victor immediately pocketed the proceeds, when the prince-bishop, somewhat astonished, and seeing his folly rather late in the day, said: "Sir, if your card had lost, how would you have paid me?" "That, sir," answered the chevalier, "is my business," and walked off; but not too quickly for Casanova, who, being "hard up" at that moment, promptly borrowed a hundred gold pieces of the winner. This stroke reveals the man of genius. In Paris he had given Talvis a sword thrust; in Vienna he borrowed money of him.

On his return to Venice, Casanova was received with open arms by his old friends, made the acquaintance of the abbé, afterwards Cardinal de Bernis, and resumed his ancient style of life. His existence was a compound of cabala, intrigue, and faro—jovial enough while it lasted, but destined finally to bring him under the notice of the dreaded Inquisitors of State, the awful Council of Three.

## CHAPTER II.

## UNDER THE LEADS.

STUDENTS of Hogarth will recollect that that great painter and greater moralist pitched upon Covent Garden as the scene of his famous "Morning." The stiff devotee is walking primly and demurely to matins, without deigning to perceive sundry roysterers in gay attire, who, after a night spent among the wine-pots, and enlivened by the rattle of the dice-box, have reeled out of Tom King's Coffee-house, and are playing "Meg's diversion" in the market. Their rich clothes are in disorder, their sumptuous ruffles and "jabots" crumpled and torn, their faces wan and sickly in the grey light of the winter sun. The ground is covered with snow, and on this pure surface the revellers stand out like foul blotches on the face of nature. Changing the venue from London to Venice, transposing summer for winter, and southern for northern manners, we stumble on a very similar scene by the shores of the Adriatic. It is a fine July morning, in the year of grace 1755. The first yellow streak of sunrise is gradually reddening into more perfect day. Slowly wending their silent way towards the Grand Canal are the fruit and vegetable boats, laden to the water's edge with cool greenery, gorgeous purple egg fruit, melons

of every shape and size, and huge pumpkins, making up in show what they lack in flavour. Towards one spot, on the quay of the Grand Canal—the Erberia, the flower and fruit market—all this wealth of beauty is tending. As the boats arrive, their contents are flung in picturesque heaps by the peasants, whose cheeks of ruddy bronze contrast strangely with the greenish-yellow hue of fashionable visitors, for it is the fashion, in this year 1755, to take a stroll in the Erberia before going to bed, and to “assist” at the unlading of the fruit boats and the opening of the market. It is not good “ton” to look fresh and lively at this merry meeting. Ladies and gentlemen think it good style to air their haggard looks—after a night spent in dancing or dicing—among the flowers of the Erberia. Abbés, nobles, captains, more or less coppery in hue, professional gamblers, actresses, dancers, debauchees of every type, saunter listlessly among the verdure. It is an odd scene to look upon at sunrise. Not so, however, does it seem to that tall, dark-visaged cavalier of almost Moorish aspect who has just arrived. He has evidently been passing the night in brilliant company, for his costume is sumptuous in the extreme. His broad shoulders and long muscular limbs are encased in a suit of light-coloured taffety, profusely adorned with many an ell of silver lace. Truly a superb dandy this young Casanova, but yet



ill at ease in his splendid raiment. Luck has been against him of late, and his once goodly pile of sequins has vanished. The last five hundred have vanished to-night, and the young rake is at his wits' end for ready cash. But this is not the worst. He has been advised by persons of prudence and authority to make himself scarce, as the air of Venice is not healthy for him, and he cannot quite make out these obscure hints. An empty pocket and an aching head oppress him sorely, as he paces moodily to and fro, scarcely heeding the beauties of nature and art by which he is surrounded.

Suddenly he turns away and makes briskly for his lodgings; and, thinking that nobody can be up at this early hour, applies his key to the door. Unnecessary trouble; the door is open, and the lock broken. Inside all is confusion, everybody is up, and the hostess complaining bitterly that the police functionary, known as Messer-grande, has entered the house by force, turned everything inside out and topsy-turvy, saying that he is looking for a certain box said to be filled with salt—a contraband article. The Signor Casanova's room has not been respected; in fact, has been subjected to a rigorous perquisition. Casanova vows vengeance and goes to bed; but cannot sleep, the loss of his last sequin and the mysterious police visit being too much for his nerves; and four hours later the adventurer,

now seriously alarmed, betakes him to his protector, the old patrician Bragadino, whom he finds in company with his two inseparable friends. Casanova recounts the outrage on his dwelling, and insists that his landlady shall have ample reparation made her; but the three old gentlemen, who know the inner life of the Venetian police, shake their heads at their scamp of a protégé, and tell him to come again at dinner-time. With an appetite by no means improved, he again presents himself in this goodly company. There has been talk in Venice to-day of the odd association of our hero with three venerable old gentlemen, perfectly respectable and infinitely devout. Venetian gossips cannot fathom this mysterious friendship. "Virtue," say they, "may be indulgent to Vice, but should hardly select it as an ally. There is only one solution possible—sorcery! The youngster is a wizard, and has bewitched the old patricians." An ugly word this "sorcery" in the domains where the Holy Office yet retains influence. Dinner over, the four oddly-assorted friends take council, and old Bragadino addresses his young scapegrace: "The box, my dear young friend, be it filled with salt or with gold, is but a pretext. It was thou whom they sought, beyond all doubt, thinking themselves sure to find thee. Since thy good genius has preserved thee thus far, be off, escape; to-morrow it may be

too late. I have myself been for eight months inquisitor of state, and I know the kind of captures that the tribunal commands. They do not break down doors to find a box of salt. Mayhap—knowing thee to be out—they made a descent on purpose to give thee time to fly. Believe me, my dear son, fly instantly to Fucino, and thence to Florence, where thou canst remain till I write thee to return. If thou art without money, here are a hundred sequins to go on with. Think that prudence commands thee to depart.” Blustering Casanova declares himself an innocent and injured lamb—guiltless of crime, and having, therefore, nothing to fear. The old man shakes his wig. “The redoubtable tribunal may think thee guilty of crimes—real or supposed—whereof it will render thee no account. Appeal to thy oracle, but depart.” Good advice, entreaties, tears, all are in vain. Casanova goes to his lodgings. Night descends on the lagoons. It is the night of the 25th of July, 1755. The returning sun brings a terrible visitor—the redoubtable Messer-grande. “Are you Giacomo Casanova?” “Yes. I am the same.” “Get up, dress, give up your papers.” “From whom do you bring this order?” “From the tribunal.”

Caught in the net, too confident Casanova! Books, papers, and desk open! “Take them,” says the prisoner, with a cold feeling creeping over his

heart. "Bound manuscripts. Where are they?" Too well-informed Messer-grande! Here they are, a pretty collection for a young sorcerer—as yet in a small way of business—the "Clavicula of Solomon," the "Zecor-ben," a "Picatrix," a "Treatise on the Planetary Hours," and the incantations necessary for raising demons of every class, cruelly damnatory just now! Messer-grande seizes upon these precious volumes, while his prisoner, in a species of dream, rises, shaves and dresses mechanically, combs himself carefully, puts on a shirt of finest lace and the famous taffety coat, with the silver lace upon it, and goes forth among the archers dressed like a bridegroom. Messer-grande puts his prey into a gondola, takes him to his office, and locks him up, without a word—neither captor nor captive being conversationally given just now. Dull hours of waiting ensue; until, about three o'clock the chief of the archers enters with an order to conduct the prisoner to the famous state prison of Venice—"Under the leads." Another silent journey in a gondola, through the smaller canals till the Grand Canal is reached, and the gloomy party descend at the quay of the prisons. Up and down they go over many stairs and through the closed bridge—the communication between the prisons and the doge's palace over the canal called Rio di Palazzo—through a gallery into a room occupied by

one in the robe of a patrician. This noble gentleman looks keenly at the prisoner, and says, "It is he. Put him in the dépôt." The prisoner, still silent, follows the gaoler of the Piombi, armed with a mighty bunch of keys, up more stairs and through more galleries into a dirty but roomy garret, where the guardian, seizing an enormous key, opens a door lined with iron, pierced with a hole about nine inches in diameter, and orders the prisoner in, while the latter is attentively considering a machine fixed to the wall. The man kindly explains, "When their excellencies order anybody to be strangled, he is seated on a stool and his neck adjusted to this collar, which is worked by a tourniquet till the patient renders up his soul to the Lord, for the confessor never quits him till he is dead." Casanova is locked in his cell; the gaoler asks if he wants anything to eat after the interesting description of the garotte; and the prisoner replies mechanically that he has not thought of such a thing.

It is a low-browed wretched room, barely six feet high, and some twelve feet square, lighted, after a fashion, by a grating two feet square, crossed by six iron bars, each an inch thick, making sixteen rectangular openings. A heavy beam cuts off a portion of the light. There is no bed, no table, no chair, no furniture indeed but a shelf. Venice is hot in July, so Casanova doffs his gorgeous mantle

of poult-de-soie, his unhappy silken coat, and his hat, trimmed with Spanish point-lace, and decked with a handsome white feather. The prisoner clings to the grating, shaking it with impotent rage, like a caged beast of prey, and strives to catch a breath of fresh air; until at last he sinks down, crushed by his misfortune, and neither speaks, thinks, nor moves for eight mortal hours of suffocation and despair.

The din of St. Mark's clock awakes him to life. Night has come, but with it neither bread nor meat, bed nor water. Has the man been flung into this den to die, to become food for the rats which skirmish so fearfully in the garret outside? He waits, waits, waits—three livelong hours. Still no sound but the clock of St. Mark remorselessly crashing the hour into his ears. Fury seizes upon him. He stamps, shrieks, howls, dashes himself against the cruel walls, rends his hands against the senseless bars. At last nature asserts her power, and the wretched captive sinks in a shapeless heap on the floor of his dungeon, and falls asleep. The inexorable clock strikes midnight, and the wearied man awakes suddenly. He puts out his hand into the darkness and grasps another, cold as ice. His hair stands on end. Is this the hand of the last tenant of this hideous chamber, the last victim of the garotte? It is only his other hand, deadened by the weight he has rested upon it!

Early morning brings the gaoler. "Have you had time to think what you would like to eat?" asks this grim functionary. Casanova, now calm, asks for soup, bouilli, roast meat, water, and wine, and bethinks him that his effects may as well be brought to him. He takes a pencil, and writes for his clothes, his bed, table, chairs, mirrors, razors, books, paper, and pens. "Strike out," saith the attendant, "books, paper, pens, mirrors, and razors; all this is forbidden fruit here, and give me money for your dinner." Three sequins survived in the pockets once well filled. One of these is handed to the janitor, and about mid-day appear furniture and food. No knives and forks however, but simply an ivory spoon—cutting instruments being forbidden.

A dismal meal this first prison dinner. Dim light, stifling air, crushing burning heat, the summer sun pitching down vertically upon the leaden roof. Another dreadful day, made more hideous by vermin, rats, and the crash of the eternal clock. Morning brings books, conceded by the mercy of the Signiory; not those asked for by the prisoner, but improving works selected for prisoners: "The Mystic City," by Sister Mary, of Agrada, and "The Adoration of the Sacred Heart," neither of them quite in Casanova's line of reading. They are better than nothing, however.

At the end of ten days the three sequins are

exhausted, and the tribunal assign fifty sous a day for the prisoner's board ; a sufficient sum for a man "under the leads" in the dog-days, almost roasted alive in his cell. Next come fever, the surgeon, convalescence, and weary days. No accusation, no trial, no news of the outer world—nothing but heat, vermin, and occasional fits of frantic fury, as week after week passes by, and the hope of deliverance grows ever fainter and fainter. Despair at last brings courage, and the desperate resolve to escape or perish becomes more and more clearly defined. Scheme after scheme is resolved in the busy brain, recalled to health by the cool breezes of winter ; but to make Casanova's plans intelligible, a few words of explanation are necessary.

The Piombi are no other than the garrets of the doge's palace, and it is from the large sheets of lead with which the roof is covered that they take their name. They are accessible either by the gates of the palace, by the building devoted to prisons, or by the covered bridge already mentioned—the Bridge of Sighs. The dungeons can only be reached, under ordinary circumstances, by passing through the hall where the inquisitors of state assemble. The secretary alone has the key, which he confides to the gaoler but once a day, in the early morning, to enable him to attend to the wants of the prisoners. This service is performed at daybreak, as at a later hour



the archers passing to and fro would be seen by all those having business with the chiefs of the Council of Ten. This council meets every day in a contiguous hall called Bussola, which the archers are obliged to cross every time they go to the Piombi.

The prisons are under the roof of two sides of the palace : three on the west—in one of which unlucky Casanova is safely hived—and four on the east. The gutter on the western side descends to the court of the palace ; the other, perpendicularly, upon the canal called Rio di Palazzo. On this side the cells are all lighted, and the prisoners can stand upright ; on the west, enormous rafters partially shut out the light of day. The floor of Casanova's cell is actually just above the Hall of the Inquisitors, where, as a rule, they meet at night after the sitting of the Council of Ten, of which the Three are members. Casanova is perfectly well aware of these particulars, and thinks the only possible mode of escape is to bore through the floor of his cell, to let himself down into the Hall of the Inquisitors at the right moment—that is to say, when it is empty—and to make off. This project is no easy one to carry out without weapons, tools, or money to bribe the archers. Nevertheless, the prisoner has taken heart, and, with rare strength of purpose and true Italian patience, goes to work. First of all, he persuades the gaoler to allow him one half-hour's walk every

day in the garret adjoining his cell. In this place he finds—growing bolder and more inquisitive by degrees—great heaps of manuscripts, and under them articles most precious—a fire-shovel, some old candlesticks, tongs, etc., the relics of an ancient prisoner of condition ; but what interests him most is a straight bolt, as thick as his thumb and at least a foot and a half long. Meanwhile, he has had inflicted upon him a gaol-mate, a companion whom he wishes “five fathoms under the Rialto.” Once more alone, on the 1st of January, 1756, he receives a present from his patron, Bragadino—a fine dressing-gown, lined with fox-skin, and a bear-skin bag to sleep in ; for, as the heat is unbearable in the summer, so is the cold merciless in the winter. He also obtains a more cheerful assortment of books and better treatment generally. He takes advantage of this to secure a block of marble from the adjoining garret, then pounces upon the bolt he has long since marked for his own, and commences a patient course of toil in the hope of conquering freedom.

Taking his piece of black marble as a whetstone, he works on, day by day, to convert the formidable bolt into a spontoon, and gradually grinds it down in eight facets of an inch and a half long, bringing it at last to a tolerably sharp point. His arms become stiff with this painful work and his hands covered with sores ; but hope sustains him,

and he surveys his bolt, converted into a powerful weapon, with pride and exultation. To hide this treasure is the first thought, and the arm-chair provides a spot; the next is, to go to work with it and pierce the floor. Clear-headed Casanova has no doubt about his locality, and doubts nothing that—the floor under his bed once perforated—he can let himself down into the hall by his bed-clothes torn into strips. Concealed under the table till the door is opened, he can then escape, or, if an archer should come in his way, the spontoon will remove him. But there is a terrible drawback to this scheme: the floor may be of any thickness, and how are the archers to be kept from sweeping with exasperating cleanliness under the bed? This difficulty must be approached with care, for fear of awaking suspicion.

Dust, it presently appears, is a killing thing to Signor Casanova, bringing on fits of sneezing and bleedings of the nose, copious and serious. The doctor is called in, and affirms that sweeping must not go on, as the patient's life might be sacrificed. The gaoler bows assent; and now, at last, the caged creature can begin to gnaw his bars. Long winter nights are against him, so his next idea is to construct a lamp. Things are now easier. Oil is obtained for salad, and flint for steeping in vinegar for the toothache. A wick is easily made, and a steel buckle will help the flint to produce a

spark. Sulphur and tinder are still wanting ; but a supple and ingenious mind, bent on one object, is not likely to want for these. The Signor Casanova is unwell, afflicted with irritation of the skin. Sulphur is wanted to make an unguent, and is supplied by the gaoler. Now for the tinder. Has the tailor done as he was commanded—put “amadou” (German tinder) under the arms of that taffety coat, to prevent the perspiration spoiling the silk ? A nervous moment ! Liberty may depend on the memory of a tailor. That careful workman has done as he was bid ; the interior of the coat contains the precious sheet of “amadou.” Sacrifice of the salad being made, the oil will suffice for a night’s work, but as the Carnival has commenced, work must be deferred for fear of unwelcome companions. An unhappy Jew, thrust upon Casanova for a couple of months, delays his operations, and worries him nearly to death, but a few days after Easter he is alone again, and work commences in earnest. The bed removed and the lamp lighted, the prisoner lies flat on the floor, spontoon in hand, furnished with a napkin to collect the fragments as they are rent away. Digging down through the flooring he patiently collects the bits, and flings them next day behind the heap of rubbish in the outer room. Like a gigantic rodent, Casanova nibbles away nightly at the massive planks, and at

the end of three weeks has pierced a triple flooring. But now a serious obstacle interposes, in the form of a layer of the little pieces of marble known at Venice as *terrazzo marmorin*—the ordinary pavement of rich men's houses. The sharpened bolt will not bite on this material. The anxious workman toils patiently and painfully, nay, pours vinegar into the hole, in the hope of softening the stone *à la Hannibal*, and at last recollects that, by attacking the cement which joins the little pieces together he will lighten his labour. Action follows thought quickly enough, and four days suffice to tear up the pavement, when another plank becomes visible—probably the last of its series. Meanwhile, time passes even under the leads, on which a midsummer sun again pours down his scorching rays. Stifled with heat, and dripping with perspiration, the strong determined man lies flat on the ground, his cherished lamp by his side, his spontoon still at work, slowly gnawing through his cage. One day he has a terrible fright. In the midst of his work he hears the grating of the bolt in the passage outside—a sound betokening an unwelcome visitor. There is barely time to blow out the light and drag the bed over the aperture, when the gaoler Lawrence introduces a companion in misfortune, an unhappy abbé, nearly suffocated by the heat and horrible stench of the cell, and frightened out of his life at the appearance of his

companion, whom he at first takes for a maniac. Soon recognising him, however, the new prisoner tells the veteran the news of the town, to his infinite delight. In eight days the abbé is again at liberty, and Casanova flies back to work, now nibbling very tenderly at the last thickness of the plank. Piercing a small hole through, he claps his eye to it and sees, as he has expected, the chamber of the Inquisitors. A less welcome sight is a perpendicular surface some eight inches deep—what he has dreaded and expected all along—one of the huge beams which support the ceiling. This involves the extension of the opening on the opposite side, as the beam would prevent the passage of the athletic adventurer. Anxious moments now till the work is done and the small holes carefully closed up, lest the light of the lamp should be seen from below. By the 23rd of August all is ready, and the 27th fixed upon for the attempt, but on the 25th comes a crushing blow.

At mid-day the bolts rattle and the gaoler enters with, "I wish you joy, sir, of the good news I bring you. Follow me." The first thought of the prisoner is, of course, of liberty.

"Give me time to dress," he cries, overcome with joy.

"There is no occasion for that, as you are only to be removed from this vile cell to another bright and new one, with two windows, out of which you

will see half of Venice, and where you can stand upright."

The poor, patient prisoner, struck down as by a thunderbolt, sinks into a chair. His head swims round and round. "Give me some vinegar, and tell the secretary that I thank the tribunal for this favour, but that I pray I may be left where I am." This appeal is only laughed at by Lawrence; the fruit of months of labour is lost, and, worse than all, the hole in the floor will be discovered. In the midst of all this misery and disappointment there is one crumb of consolation—the spontoon, concealed in the arm-chair, is removed with it into the new quarters. There is a terrible uproar when the hole is discovered, and much seeking and poking among mattresses and cushions, but the precious weapon escapes notice. Nevertheless, nothing can be done with it. The new cell is perfectly fresh and clean, and would show the slightest scratch on its surface. Escape seems farther off than ever.

One day Casanova orders the gaoler to buy him the works of Maffei; but as that worthy comes in for any surplus that may be in hand at the end of the month, he is terribly averse to extraordinary expenses, and suggests that other people in the prison have books, and that they might advantageously lend them to each other. The "*Rationarium*" of Petau is exchanged for the first volume of Wolf,

and a correspondence is opened by means of the hollow backs of the vellum-bound books, which sit flat when the books are closed, but form a kind of pocket when it is opened. Backwards and forwards pass letters between the tenants of cells on the same perpendicular. Casanova finds that overhead are two occupants, one Father Balbi, of noble Venetian family, and a Count Andrew Aschino of Udine, a fat old man. Casanova writes with his finger-nail trimmed to a point, and dipped in mulberry-juice, the books themselves supply fly-leaves to be torn out, written over, and slipped into the hollow book-backs. One subject occupies the minds of all the prisoners—their escape; but the mind of the reverend father Balbi is more critical than inventive, and Casanova knows that he at least cannot go to work for a while. Nevertheless he informs the monk of the existence of his precious spontoon, and offers to convey it to him, if he will use it in making an opening through the ceiling of his own cell into the superior garret, and in cutting his way through the floor to Casanova, who then will answer for the success of the operation. His opinion of the discretion and skill of the reverend father is not very great, but the great adventurer must work with such tools as he has. He writes Balbi to provide himself beforehand with a couple of score of pictures of saints to cover over the damaged ceiling and floor.



The difficulty now is to convey the working tool from one cell to the other. The wadded dressing-gown lined with fox fur is thought of, but abandoned; and at last, after severe cogitation, the true device is hit upon. Casanova compels the gaoler to buy him a new folio edition of the Vulgate, just out; the volume is brought—and he finds that the unhappy spontoon is just two inches longer than the book.

New difficulties and delays supervene, but the inventive brain of the magician is equal to the task. St. Michael's day is coming on, and a dish of macaroni and cheese would be a friendly gift from one prisoner to another. Lawrence, the gaoler, now says that the neighbour would be glad of the great book, which cost three sequins. "Good," says Casanova, "I will send it him with the macaroni; but bring me the biggest dish you have, for I like to do things well." The spontoon is wrapped in paper, and stowed in the back of the book, care being taken that it shall project only an inch on either side. If the macaroni dish be now only big enough to hide the book on which it is to be placed, the weapon will be transferred safely. By good fortune the dish is enormous. Casanova himself fills the dish with macaroni, seasons it deftly, and fills up the interstices with a copious dose of melted butter. Brimful, the dish will require all the steadiness of Lawrence

to keep it from spilling over on to the valuable book, against which dire disaster he is duly cautioned. Lawrence grumbles at the brimming dish, but carries it—book and all—safely to Balbi, who now goes to work. In a week he succeeds in making a hole of sufficient size in the ceiling, and in masking it with a saintly picture. This done, the monk works away, groaning much over the severity of the work, but encouraged by his correspondent, who assures him that it is child's play. Taking more kindly to his work as he goes on, Balbi soon removes thirty-six bricks, and on the 16th of October, at ten o'clock in the morning, a slight tapping overhead assures Casanova that all is going on well. He has now no doubt that, with the help of a companion, he will in three or four hours bore a hole in the roof of the ducal palace, and place himself upon the leads instead of under them. All is ready for the attempt, when once more the bolts squeak, and the archers of the Seigniorie again inflict upon Casanova a hideous visitor, at whose apparition thoughts of immediate flight vanish like a morning dream.

There seems to be no end to the ill-luck of the Signor Casanova !

---

## CHAPTER III.

## OUT IN THE WORLD.

SORADACI, the new comer, imposed as a comrade upon Casanova by the relentless Seignior, is a paltry scoundrel, much despised by that eminent personage, whose own villanies are of the heroic type, and who looks disdainfully on the wretch who asks if he is sure to be allowed ten sous a day for his maintenance. Scornfully he tells the shabby rascal to eat, drink, and be as merry as his inferior nature will admit of. Meanwhile the sordid creature's life hangs upon a thread. All is ready and ripe for flight, and this worm alone is in the way. Casanova reflects. There is the "short way," certainly, but the Signor Casanova—no bad hand at the rapier—has no stomach for deliberate murder. One must draw a line somewhere. Faro, cabala, and other trifles he is ever ready to indulge in; but at murder he stops short. He tests Soradaci, to find if he can trust him, and is betrayed in a small matter; but this reveals the pitiful subject of the experiment as an abject coward and superstitious slave. Astute Casanova nearly frightens him to death, and, confiding in his terror, sets his accomplices to work, predicting their appearance in his cell as a vision. Soradaci, submitted to frightful oaths and vows,

sinks to the ground in a paroxysm of fear, dreading instant death.

On the 31st of October the gaoler Lawrence comes to the cell and carries back a book to Balbi with a concealed message, telling him to crash through the ceiling at about mid-day. At the appointed hour a few strokes demolish the slight impediment remaining, and Father Balbi sees his colleague for the first time. Soradaci, who is, among other things, a barber, is compelled to shave the accomplices, and Casanova, mounting through the aperture made with so much trouble, finds the fat count, and despairs of getting him over the leads and out of trouble. The author of the scheme now inspects the roof, and, thinking himself sure to force his way through, cuts the bedclothes into strips and makes a rope a hundred feet long, taking immense care to secure every knot. By nightfall the hole in the roof is made. The woodwork has been split and splintered away, but the lifting of the riveted sheet of lead is a serious affair. Balbi and Casanova, combining their strength, succeed in pushing the spontoon between the gutter and the sheet above it, and putting their shoulders to it, double up the sheet lead to make a sufficient opening, but find the light of the crescent moon a terrible impediment. On a night like this everybody will be abroad on the square of St.

Mark, and the shadows of escaping prisoners will hardly fail to be seen, and remarked. There is nothing for it but to wait till the moon is down. The fat count, meanwhile, preaches ineffectually, and endeavours to dissuade his friends from their rash adventure. He points out the angle of the roof, the risk of the descent, the chances of being shot by the sentinels, and the agreeable prospect of being dashed to pieces. Inwardly cursing his cowardly companions, Casanova yet conceals his fury and persuades the fat count to part with his last gold pieces—the whole capital of the enterprise. This achieved, he waits patiently till the moon is down, and then quickly passes out on to the roof, followed by the monk—the count being given up as a bad job. The leaden sheets which cover the roof are slippery with dew, and afford no foothold on the terrible slope. Casanova, feeling that the slightest mishap will precipitate him into the canal, which he knows to be too shallow to save him from being dashed to pieces, is yet undaunted, and leads the way in the painful and dangerous ascent. With their packs on their backs, Casanova and Balbi attain the summit of the ducal palace, and sit astride upon it. The outlook is bad. There seems to be nothing for it but to drop into the canal, till quick-eyed Casanova espies a skylight. Like a ready tactician,

he instantly grasps the situation. The skylight probably opens into some garret of the ducal palace, whence a descent into the deserted official chambers of the Republican government would be easy. If the ascent of the slippery roof were gruesome work in the darkness, the descent is ten times more awful. If the Signor Casanova miss his mark and fail to "bring up" against the skylight, he may commend himself to Paralis, his familiar demon; for the force of gravity, unless interfered with, will take him to the bottom of the shallow canal already spoken of. A moment's hesitation, and his mind is made up. It is now or never; do or die. Slipping down the dangerous leads, he finds himself—in a space of time short enough, but which feels like an age—astride upon the skylight. The window and its bars are soon forced, and after having lowered his companion, Casanova finds nothing to which to fasten the rope to enable him to follow. Casting about, he finds a small cupola under repair, and near it a ladder, to which he attaches his rope and prepares to descend; but in mortal terror that the ladder, when released, will fall into the canal and make a splash, he climbs down to the gutter, and, at imminent risk of his life, forces up one end of the ladder under the skylight till it sticks fast for a moment and ultimately descends into the garret, where its end is received

by Balbi. Casanova now descends and finds himself, with his companion, in a loft some thirty paces long by twenty broad. Feeling the effect of his tremendous exertions, he falls flat on the ground, and actually sleeps soundly for three hours and a half, until the 'monk Balbi shakes him again into life. It is now about five o'clock in the morning. A glance around shows that this loft forms no part of the prison. There must be a way out. The lock is forced, and entry made into a chamber where a key is on the table. Next, through the gallery of the archives, down a little stone staircase, and the whilom prisoners are in the ducal chancery. There is an open window by which descent were easy into the labyrinth of little courts which surrounds the church of St. Mark, but no such madness is to be thought of. On the bureau is an iron instrument for punching holes in parchment to attach the seals. Casanova thinks a little incidental burglary may not be amiss, and "prises" open a desk in the hope of finding sequins. In vain. There is no money in the desk, and the chancery—after the manner of chanceries—is difficult to get out of. The lock will not yield, so a panel of the door must be broken away. This occupies half an hour, and Casanova, after pushing his friend through, is dragged through by him, the ragged wood scarifying him not a little. With clothes torn to rags, the confederates

slip down two pairs of stairs, and find themselves stopped by a massive door, impregnable except by artillery. There is nothing to do now but to sit down and wait till the porter or the sweepers come to open the door. Meanwhile there is no lack of occupation. Balbi has preserved a whole skin, but energetic Casanova is cruelly mangled. Blood streams from the terrible cuts inflicted by the leads of the gutter, and the lesser wounds incurred in being dragged through the hole in the door. With some difficulty the blood is staunched, and the greater wounds bound up, and the hero of the adventure, who no longer doubts its perfect success, dons once more the famous taffety coat with silver lace, adjusts his hose over his bandaged limbs, puts on three shirts, gorgeously trimmed with point-lace, and then laughs heartily at the figure he cuts in a summer ball dress on the morning of the 1st of November. The grand mantle of poult-de-soie he throws over Balbi, telling him that he looks as if he had stolen it. Putting on the gold-laced hat with the white plume, Casanova then looks out of the window, an imprudence which might have spoiled all, but really helped him onwards. Some early idlers observe the apparition of the gold-laced hat, and fetch the porter, under the impression that somebody has been locked in the ducal palace by mistake over night. Casanova hears the rattle of keys, and



looking through a crack in the door espies a man alone, mounting the staircase, with a huge bunch of keys in his hand. With ready weapon he awaits the guardian ; but there is no occasion for violence. The door opens widely, the sleepy fellow opens his eyes and mouth in astonishment—little wotting what a narrow escape he has had for his life—as the companions, not appearing in too great a hurry, but moving quickly down the Giant's Staircase, pass through the grand entrance of the palace, cross the little square, and step into a gondola. “I want to go to Fucino ; call another gondolier,” cries Casanova. Away they go, the custom-house is soon left behind, and the gondoliers are clearing with vigorous strokes the canal of the Giudecca. Half-way along this canal, Casanova asks innocently :

“ Shall we be soon at Mestri ? ”

“ But, signor, you told me to go to Fucino.”

“ You are mad. I told you Mestri.”

The second barcarol backs up his “ mate,” and, to the rage of Casanova, stupid Balbi sides with the men. Casanova, feeling as if he would like to massacre his companion, then bursts into a fit of hilarity, and says perhaps he did say Fucino, but must go to Mestri all the same. The gondoliers offer to row him to England if he wishes it. Enjoying the morning air with a zest he has never

hitherto experienced, Casanova speeds on to Mestri, lands quickly, catches a vetturino, and gets to Treviso without mishap. Here commence the difficulties of passing the frontier, and escaping from the dominion of the most Serene of all Republics. Further progress by post is out of the question. Firstly, it would be dangerous; secondly, there is no money left except a few francs. The shortest way is by Bassano, but Casanova prefers the longer route, by Feltri, as being a safer line to the territory of the Bishop of Trent. Along unfrequented paths, and across fields, the associates make straight towards the frontier, and soon put four-and-twenty miles between them and Treviso. They now part company, agreeing to meet at Borgo di Valsugano, the first town over the border. Leaving the monk to creep along the valleys, Casanova pushes over the hills, and after extracting six sequins from an unwilling acquaintance, not without threatening his life, buys a riding-coat and boots, and mounted on a hired ass, arrives at La Scala, passes the guard, and drives behind a pair of horses into Valsugano, free again at last.

At Botzen, Casanova receives funds from his old patron, Bragadino, and passing through Munich and Strasbourg, fetches up in Paris on the 3rd of January, 1757. He is well received by his old friend, Baletti, and is on his way to Versailles in

quest of the Abbé de Bernis, Minister of Foreign Affairs, when he finds the whole town upset by the attempt of Damien to assassinate the king. Casanova becomes the fashion—after a fashion. De Bernis introduces him to the Duke de Choiseul, who, inclined enough to listen to him, is crushed by the Italian's verbosity. Like everybody else, the Duke de Choiseul is anxious to hear the story of the flight from the Piombi. Injudicious Casanova says that the narrative will occupy two hours.

"Give me an abridgment," saith the duke.

"Brief as I may be, I shall want two hours."  
Pitiless raconteur!

"Reserve the details for another day."

"In this story there is nothing of interest but the details."

"So, so, but you can cut them down," a remark which gives a high idea of the duke's editorial power.

"Very well," says Casanova, and gives the duke a dry story in a few words, wearies him, and is dismissed with a few kindly words, the duke rejoicing in his departure.

This interview with the Prime Minister of France is hardly so disastrous as it deserves to be. Casanova is sent to Dunkirk on a mission which looks very much like "secret service," and by the help of De Bernis,

makes the acquaintance of the famous financiers Pâris-Duvernay, and also that of the Count de Boulogne. The Duvernays want to raise twenty millions of francs, to establish a military school, and M. de Boulogne is burning to bring the French navy into such perfect condition, as to make a descent upon England. De Bernis, wishing to serve his scampish but interesting friend, has introduced him to these people as a financier of rare ability. Casanova knows no more of finance to-day than he did of cabala a few years ago, when old Bragadino insisted on believing him a conjurer; but he is equal to the occasion, saying to himself, "They think I am a financier, therefore I have the reputation of one; therefore I am one." The gambler's brain soon produces a dainty dish to set before a king. The nature of the dish may easily be guessed—a voluntary contribution of the nation towards the royal exchequer, costing but little to collect. Casanova states this without mentioning what his plan really is, when Duvernay cuts him short by handing him a portfolio, with the words:

"Monsieur Casanova, here is your project."

Alas! he is forestalled: his projected plan for a royal lottery has already been proposed by one Calsabigi, a famous manager of lotteries. The bold Casanova is not dashed at this, "not a jot," but throws in his lot with his rival, backing up the

scheme very cleverly and boldly. The timid financiers object that "there is no capital."

"A mere matter of detail. Royal treasury—decree of council—and the thing's done. All that is required is that the nation shall suppose the king in a condition to pay a hundred millions."

"But how pay this sum if lost?"

"By the time it is lost there will be a hundred and fifty millions to pay it with."

"But yet the king may lose an exorbitant sum at the first drawing."

"All the better for the popularity of the lottery. The king has for himself one chance out of five, and must infallibly make his twenty millions."

The Brothers Calsabigi have been at work for two long years, have every detail of their lottery scheme cut and dried, but have not made as much way in all that time, as Casanova has in a few minutes by his happy audacity, and blissful ignorance of the difficulties of the enterprise. An alliance is soon made, and the young partner elected spokesman. The decree is issued, and Casanova gets a pension of four thousand francs and the control of six bureaux, the Calsabigi still retaining the direction of the affair. Casanova now sells five of his allotted bureaux for ten thousand francs, and puts his servant in the sixth, situated in the Rue St. Denis. His next plan is to draw custom to his own bureau, and

to do this he announces that every winning ticket signed by him will be paid at the said bureau twenty-four hours, instead of a week, after the drawing. This skilful move draws a great crowd of gamesters to the Rue St. Denis, to the great profit of the Venetian, who gets six per cent. on the receipts. All the other holders of bureaux are furious and raise a terrible howl, but the only answer they get is a recommendation to follow the lead of Casanova, if they have the money to do it with. The late prisoner "under the leads" is now making money quickly. The lottery is a complete success, and, as he predicted, the great financiers are the first to complain that the profit to the exchequer of six hundred thousand francs on the first drawing, on a receipt of two millions, is "too great" to inspire hope in the people; but, luckily, Paris wins heavily, and the success of the capital is sufficient to insure the success of the scheme. By the simple "gift of the gab" Casanova has secured an income of a hundred thousand francs a year—a considerable revenue in the middle of the eighteenth century. It becomes the fashion to play at the lottery. Our adventurer rolls in his carriage, overdresses himself after the manner of his kind, and has his pockets stuffed with lottery tickets, which he sells everywhere and at all times, in season and out of season; persons of quality surround him at the

opera and at the theatres, investing heavily, and the fortunate youth returns home nightly with pockets laden with gold.

Behold Casanova then a man of fashion—in his own opinion at least. The present historian has grave doubts whether the wonderful Venetian adventurer ever really advanced much beyond the Bohemian fringe of good society. It is not difficult to picture in the mind's eye the ineffable sneer with which the Rohans and Richelieus welcome the ill-mannered foreigner who dresses like a mountebank, talks loudly and tediously, plays heavily, and sells lottery-tickets between the acts of the opera. He himself, lucky fellow, is snugly encased in the triple armour of vanity. He is not, physically speaking, a bad specimen of a man, but his peculiar monomania is Admirable Crichtonism. He is an elegant poet, a profound scholar, an excellent wit, an accomplished swordsman, a superb dancer, makes the best bow in Europe, deals at faro with elegance and good fortune, is a perfect ladies' man, wears the biggest diamonds, the finest watches, snuff-boxes, and clothes in Paris. It never occurs to the self-satisfied creature that the narrative—taking two hours to get through—of his escape from the Piombi tries the patience of his hearers, and that his excessively-dignified airs are heartily enjoyed and laughed at by his Parisian friends. Nevertheless,

it must be candidly admitted that Casanova possesses one great element of success—he never shirks a quarrel. The slightest hint as to his style of dealing at *faro*, the faintest disinclination to believe his often astounding narratives, and he is ready, sword in hand. He believes firmly in a certain “*botte secrète*”—a cunning thrust which never fails him. Moreover, he wears a sword of the utmost length permitted in polite society, and when he has “cleaned out” his pigeon, is ready to truss him. On a memorable occasion he has the honour of fighting a member of the house of La Tour d’Auvergne, whom he wounds slightly, and then attends upon as doctor and hospital nurse.

This memorable encounter procures him the friendship of his late adversary, a gallant unsuspecting gentleman, who introduces him to his aunt, the Marchioness d’Urfé, a lady of illustrious lineage, but mad as a March hare, with brain bemuddled with Rosicrucian dreams, a firm believer in cabala and spells—the ready prey of a charlatan. This old lady has heard of Casanova and of his reputation as a magician, and is delighted to know him. His knowledge of the recondite mysteries of Paracelsus is very “general,” but, by listening adroitly, he soon finds out what he is supposed to know. Concealing his astonishment, he hears the great lady discourse learnedly on the philosopher’s stone, and is admitted to her library, which had once belonged to the great



D'Urfé and Renée de Savoie his wife. She possesses a commentary of Raymond Lully explaining the mysteries of Roger Bacon and Heber, and the Tree of Diana constructed by the famous Taliamed (De Maillet), whom she believes to be still living, and from whom she receives imaginary letters. From this wonderful library they pass into a not less marvellous laboratory—rather alchemical than chemical—and finally sit down cosily together to construct the pentacle of Polyphilus. Casanova's early reading in conjuring and his wonderful memory now stand him in good stead. He boldly compares notes, and comes out of the trial gloriously; and really knowing something of astronomy as well as of astrology, mixes up the planets so skilfully with the pentacle of Solomon, that the old lady is fairly bewitched by her new friend. They discourse concerning their familiar spirits. Casanova "rings in" his old friend Paralis, and pretends to teach his patroness how to make the magic pile, and get cabalistically at the Unknown. Lest all this should seem pure romance, let us recollect that at this moment Saint-Germain is in Paris, and enjoys the reputation of being at least three hundred years old. Credulity reigns in every salon, and Casanova reigns in that of the Marchioness d'Urfé. It is difficult to say what influence his fine dark eyes may have produced on the possibly still impressionable marchioness; but

her intense devotion to the abstract sciences favours the conclusion that in Casanova she only sees the "adept"—the deft wielder of cabala, the depository of the Rosicrucian secrets of spiritual and physical regeneration, the mortal recipient of the wisdom of Paralis and other familiar spirits. Casanova himself is at times overpowered by her redundant faith. She believes him to be possessed of the philosopher's stone, and to be in familiar converse with the elementary spirits.

Astute Giacomo dines daily with the great lady, and is much exercised in his mind how best to disabuse her, if at all, and concludes that the best thing he can do is to let things alone. His occasional colloquies with the very tough and well-seasoned organ which, in his case, supplies the place of a conscience, are amusing enough, and it is curious to see how his scruples yield before a superb rent-roll. The great dame herself is a singular creature. Her Rosicrucian and alchemic mania apart, she is stingy enough and shrewd withal, speculating freely with her immense revenues and making great profits. So they go on dining together and spending long, and, to Casanova, inexpressibly dull evenings over abracadabra and other magical mysteries.

During this specially successful period of his career the Venetian establishes a slight foothold in really good society—thanks to Madame d'Urfé and De

Bernis. Royal "France"—Louis the Well-beloved—is poorer than ever, and certain Dutch merchants hint to the successful adventurer that a loan might be made on a portion of the crown jewels. Lucky in some negotiations for Madame d'Urfé, who presents him with a handsome "brokerage," Casanova is hardly so fortunate at first in the affair of the great loan, which falls through for a while. Pending these weighty affairs, he works his cabalistic pyramid for the benefit of his host, a Dutch banker, and by extraordinarily lucky blunders wins him a large sum. By sheer good fortune he makes three hundred thousand florins for himself, and has an offer of the hand of a banker's daughter and a partnership in the firm. As if good luck were completely on his side, he also, at last, completes the arrangement for the French loan, and is triumphant "all round."

Were our adventurer a reasonable being, his story should finish here; but an existence in Holland—wife, money, and iceboats into the bargain—does not commend itself to the genius of Casanova. He burns to revisit Paris and cut a dash there, the vulgar love of show and expense triumphing over every other consideration. Like many more of his kind he "leaves his luck" in Holland, and, moreover, runs up a score of forty thousand florins for diamonds.

Returned to Paris, he sets up a magnificent estab-

lishment in the Rue Montorgueil, launches a couple of carriages, a magnificent coachman, five horses, grooms, and lackeys ; invites Madame d'Urfé and other members of the fashionable world to dinner, and secures the friendship of another great lady, Madame de Rumin. The contact of all this good society and the possession of capital inspire him with the wish to make a fortune honestly, and he becomes a manufacturer, thereby getting completely out of his depth. His speculation is to produce upon silk, by printing, similar effects to those produced at Lyons by weaving. He secures an expert to do the work and court patronage to help him on, engages immense works, buys hundreds of pieces of costly goods, hires a crowd of workpeople, and puts three hundred thousand francs into the speculation at once, risking besides his entire fortune. Paralis, or some other protecting genius of Casanova, is apparently displeased at this performance, for trouble arises immediately. His intrigues involve him in a criminal prosecution. Getting out of this difficulty, he stumbles on another, for the war reducing business to a low ebb, he finds himself under the necessity of taking a partner, who puts fifty thousand francs into the concern. Three days after payment his treasurer disappears with the money, and the new partner insists on restitution. Casanova is arrested, but is released by Madame d'Urfé. Ill-treated and

cheated out of his "dues" on the first government loan, he is yet courageous enough to undertake the negotiation of a second, and settling his affairs in Paris, departs once more for Holland, furnished with a hundred thousand francs in money and an equivalent capital in jewels.

---

## CHAPTER IV.

### LIGHTS AND SHADOWS.

ARRIVING in Holland to negotiate the great loan, Casanova found another famous adventurer, Count Saint-Germain, engaged upon the same enterprise. They both came to grief—the attempted operation being an utter failure. There is little doubt that the loan was merely a pretext, on the part of Casanova, to get clear of Paris, as we find him collecting in Holland the whole of his funds—amounting to one hundred thousand guilders, besides jewels—dismissing servants, and preparing for a gambling campaign in Germany. Omitting again to marry the banker's daughter, he pushed on by Utrecht to Cologne, then the court of a prince-bishop, the headquarters of the Austrians, and one of the gayest spots in Europe. This prince-bishop, an elector of the German empire, was a curious kind of ecclesiastic,

a grand master of the Teutonic order, a lover of dinners, balls, masquerades, and faro. After a dissipated time in congenial company, our wanderer moved to Stuttgardt. Here he got into a terrible scrape, and was obliged to beat a sudden retreat to save his money and jewels. There is a French saying, "A pirate, pirate et demi," and Casanova found that the sharpers of Stuttgardt could "give him points." Under the influence of drugged wine he lost four thousand louis d'or on credit, and after many endeavours to escape paying up he was obliged to fly from the city. Dreading assassination, he thought it well to put some considerable distance between his enemies and himself, and remained for a while in Switzerland, where "almost" he was persuaded to turn monk. In Switzerland he met the celebrated physiologist, Haller, "a handsome man, six feet high, and stout in proportion—a colossus, physically and intellectually," and at Geneva he made the acquaintance of Voltaire, and for a while remained on very friendly terms with that great but irascible Frenchman. At this time Casanova saw a great deal of pleasant company, played heavily with several Englishmen—notably Fox—and discoursed at great length with Voltaire and the famous physician Tronchin, then in attendance on the Duc de Villars, a superannuated *petit-maitre*. "His face and figure conveyed the

idea of a woman seventy years old dressed in man's clothes, lean and haggard, and incapable of forgetting that she had been handsome in her youth. His pimply cheeks were plastered with paint, his dry cracked lips smeared with carmine, his eyebrows carefully blackened, his teeth false. This odd figure was crowned with an enormous wig, exhaling a stifling odour of ambergris, counteracted by that of a huge bouquet in his button-hole."

Nothing throws a more amusing light on the ridiculous vanity and heroic impudence of our hero than his conversations with the old man of Ferney. To Voltaire, the Venetian was evidently a curious specimen—a state prisoner escaped from the most famous dungeons in Europe—and therefore interesting to him. For a while he seems to have been inclined to pat him on the back, but the Italian's pomposity and absurd affectation of scholarship finally stirred up the Frenchman's bile. He must have been a dreadful bore, this tall Moorish-looking man, who could not, and would not, tell how he escaped from the Piombi, his conversational "*cheval de bataille*," unless the audience agreed to listen to him for two mortal hours. But this was not all. If it be possible to imagine a more loathsome creature than a teller of long stories, it is the eternal quoter of Horace. Everybody is sick and tired of Horatian maxims now, and the Prince de

Ligne tells us that eighty years ago opinion on this subject was identical with that of to-day. Casanova ignored this truth, and seriously marred his own career, while embittering the lives of others, by this mania of his for exhibiting what he imagined to be erudition. Voltaire, however, was not a man to be bored with impunity. If Casanova spouted his translation of Crébillon's *Rhadamiste* into Italian alexandrines, Voltaire revenged himself by flinging at him huge slabs out of *Tancrède*. So far as can be ascertained, other people were present at these famous interviews. What they must have endured no tongue can tell. Let us draw a veil over their sufferings.

Overweighted among the savants, of whom he persisted in thinking himself one, Casanova shone more brilliantly among the minor adventurers—like a paste diamond among mere cut glass. We find him, a few days after his last interview with Voltaire, at the Baths of Aix, in Savoy, then a famous resort of those whose potential fortunes were in the pockets of others. At the table d'hôte there is a mongrel but joyous company—pretty women, dashing men, well dressed in gay raiment, with swords perhaps rather too long, and with lace ruffles of great depth and richness—very useful in dealing the cards. Here is the famous Parcalier, recently come into the marquisate of Priè, the excellent Abbé Gilbert, the



amiable Chevalier Zeroli, the Viscount Desarmoises, and the like. They are playing for small stakes, these clever gentlemen, for they are playing among themselves, and dog eating dog is dull work. Casanova sees that there is nothing to be got in this company; but being well supplied with money, plays away, and after losing a few small sums, breaks the little bank of the marquis. Unable to keep quiet within hail of a pack of cards, he is next persuaded to make a bank himself, and behold the magnificent magician installed at *faro*, behind four hundred louis d'or, without counting smaller money! A score of professional gamblers are playing against his bank, and the eyes of Casanova are wide open. Nevertheless he is going rapidly to the bad, when a carriage rolls up to the door of the inn, and three Englishmen come in—Fox and a couple of friends. Fox recognises Casanova, and the three Britons sit down and begin playing for “runs,” on a card threatening to break the bank, with the usual result, for at the third deal the English are “cleaned out,” and Casanova is joyous. While this has been doing, fresh horses have been put to, and the English are prepared to start again, when the youngest of them takes out of his portfolio a bill of exchange, and says :

“Will you let me stake this bill of exchange on any one card without knowing its value?”

"Yes," replies Casanova, rising to the level of the occasion; "provided you tell me on whom it is drawn, and the value does not exceed my bank?"

The Briton looks at the heap of gold, and confesses that the bank is equal to meeting the note, which is drawn upon Zappata, of Turin. Agreed: the Englishman cuts the cards, puts his bill of exchange on the ace, and loses it. The banker puts it in his pocket without looking at it, and the loser shakes hands and bids him good-bye, laughing. A minute later Fox comes back, and begs Casanova to lend him fifty louis—a sum repaid in London, three years later.

Skirmishing over the Continent, leading a life of gaming and intrigue, Casanova felt the immense inconvenience of his want of birth and title. He made the most of his ribbon of the Roman Order of the Golden Spur, and was laughed at consumedly for wearing a decoration that no person of consideration could have been hired to put on at any price, so contemptuously was the papal ribbon regarded by people really in society. In fact, the Order of the Spur was easily obtained from the Pope, who scattered it broadcast over the shoulders of some of the greatest scamps in Europe. Still the ribbon looked well, thought Casanova—far better than nothing—but yet the name, simple M. Casanova, was too bourgeois to suit our dashing Venetian,

who sighed for the noble prefix "de" to his name. Of course he could not call himself De Casanova without being laughed at, so he sat down and did, perhaps, the most original act of his very original life. Anybody else would have thought of stealing a name from some obscure person or place, but Casanova rose superior to this shabby device. He invented a name for himself—new, original, and entirely his own. Whether he consulted his familiar genius, or made an abracadabric pyramid, or produced the name in a moment of inspiration, it matters little, for the name reads well enough. The illustrious Chevalier de Seingalt hath surely a better ring than plain Signor Casanova—Mr. Newhouse. His new name, however, caused him some little trouble at first. On one occasion he was questioned by the local authority :

"Why do you travel under a false name?"

"I do nothing of the kind?"

"You are Giacomo Casanova of Venice."

"The same."

"By what right then do you call yourself Seingalt?"

"By the right of authorship and the common property of mankind in the alphabet. The name is mine, for I made it myself."

Exit Seingalt, leaving local authority confounded.  
For awhile the extraordinary luck of Casanova

preserved him from the consequences of his various misdeeds ; but Fortune at last began to show signs of getting tired of her favourite. A fatal duel at the conclusion of an orgie compelled him to fly suddenly from Paris, whither he had again betaken himself, and his retreat was so rapid that he was obliged to leave his secretary to bring away his effects, worth some fifty thousand crowns. The secretary packed everything up very carefully, and then disappeared with it from the ken of his master, whose streak of bad luck followed him to Augsburg, where he lost all the rest of his money, pawned his jewels, and was just trembling on the brink of misery, when the extraordinary old woman, over whom he exercised an unspeakable fascination, sent him fifty thousand francs. Allowing fully for the credulity of the time, it is yet impossible to doubt that Madame d'Urfé was mad. She was thoroughly convinced that, by undergoing a lengthened period of probation—not unlike that prescribed at a later date by Cagliostro—she could, by Casanova's assistance, transfer her life to a male infant born under certain planetary influences, and lead a new existence as a man, without losing cognisance of her identity. The credit of inventing all this nonsense, in which the fabled cauldron of Medea and the story of Tiresias are curiously jumbled together, is clearly not due to Casanova, whose difficulty was to

control and regulate the extravagant conduct of the great lady, and to fill his own pockets meanwhile. From time to time he extracted enormous sums of money from her, and, although betrayed and denounced as an impostor by the confederates whom he was compelled to employ, he never lost his empire over her until her death deprived him, not only of a large revenue, but of that protection which her position in the world enabled her to extend to him. Indeed, the loss of his protectress was felt immediately and severely by our adventurer, whose efforts to obtain employment in foreign courts were invariably frustrated by the Venetian ambassadors, who, however well they might be disposed towards him personally, stood in too great awe of the terrible Council of Three to afford him the slightest public recognition.

In London his career was unfortunate in the extreme. Casanova was charged with a mission to a certain Theresa Imer, well known in London as the Madame Cornelis whose balls in Soho Square were resorted to by the most fashionable people in London, at two guineas per head. Here he made, thanks to the French ambassador, the acquaintance of Lord Hervey, the husband of Miss Chudleigh, and other persons of quality; but suffered agonies from the vile cookery which prevailed at that time. To him it appeared that the English

ate neither bread nor soup, never touched dessert, and, in short, devoured meals without either beginning or end. Beer, excepting porter, "a species of nectar," he could not drink, and he was disgusted with port wine. Hence our chevalier was obliged to furnish himself with a French cook and French wines regardless of expense. This style of living, and an awkward business about a bill of exchange, brought Casanova at last to grief. He fled suddenly from England, and hied him to the court of Frederick the Great, thinking to make his way easily at the Court of the Protestant hero.

On the road he received a remittance from his old friend Bragadino, which enabled him to make a handsome appearance at Berlin, where he found another old friend, one of the Calsabigi, with whom he had started the lottery which became, on the death of Pâris-Duvernay, the Royal Lottery. Calsabigi had left France for Belgium, where his lottery had proved a failure, and had since been managing a similar enterprise for the King of Prussia, who, although fortunate up to that time, had decided on giving it up. Casanova undertook to talk the king over, but found Frederick made of very different material from that of Bragadino and poor Madame d'Urfé. He found the king at Sans Souci in an undress uniform, booted as usual, and after a long argument with his majesty

he made a half-success of his mission, as all that he could obtain from the king was authority to re-open the lottery, but not on his royal account. What the king thought of the Venetian popinjay, who presented himself in a brand-new costume of puce-coloured silk, with rings on all his fingers, a watch in each fob, his cordon and cross of the Order of the Golden Spur, is not known, but he evidently took a certain fancy to his powerful build, which would have qualified him even for a Prussian Grenadier ; but Casanova spoilt all by his trenchant manner and unhappy mania for speaking ill of others. He took it into his head to tell the king that Maupertuis was not much of a physicist ; D'Alembert not much of a geometrician ; Voltaire a mediocre poet ; D'Argens a mediocre philosopher ; Lamettrie a miserable doctor ; Labeaumelle a bad critic ; Diderot a bad writer ; and Kœnig a pedant. The king saw that Casanova was not the man he wanted, but nevertheless tried to employ him if possible, sent for him again, and commenced :

“ Have you patience and the spirit of order ? ”

“ Not much, sire,”

“ And money ? ”

“ None at all.”

“ All the better. You will be content with a small salary.”

“ I must be, for I have spent more than a million.”

"How did you get it?"

"By cabala."

"What's that?"

"I have known the past and predicted the future."

"You are then an adventurer?"

"True, sire, and if ever I catch Fortune by the hair I will never let go again."

"It is not here that you will find her, I can tell you. Follow me to the Cadet's college. I have there a considerable quantity of wretches, pigs, and fools, for governors, preceptors, or teachers; I don't know how to call them. I should like something better; come."

Casanova accompanies the king, and is horrified to see the king flourishing his cane about among the professors, and still more to hear that the salary of a professor is only three hundred crowns. He makes his escape at once.

Having failed to fix himself at Berlin, he next determined to try his luck in Russia, at the court of the great Catharine, and succeeded in obtaining an interview with the empress in the summer garden of the palace; but, while waiting the arrival of her majesty, amused himself by roaring with laughter at the wretched collection of statuary, and at the absurd manner in which the figures were labelled with the wrong names. Hump-backed Apollos stood side by side with scraggy Venuses and Cupids modelled



from grenadiers. A little laughing figure was dubbed Heraclitus; another weeping one, Democritus; a long-bearded philosopher was labelled Sappho; an old woman, Avicenna; and a brace of youths, Philemon and Baucis. While Casanova was shaking his sides, the empress appeared suddenly on the scene, and asked him what he thought of the decorations of the garden. Supple-witted when he liked, the Italian got out of his false position very well; but subsequently lost the good graces of the empress by his insane love of argument. Still he did not actually get into disgrace until the truth came out that he had been keeping a faro-bank in a café. This discovery destroyed all his prospects of advancement, and the unquiet spirit determined to try his luck in Poland.

Warsaw at this time was a gay capital, the seat of a giddy court. Casanova immediately found himself at home among the Italian singers and dancers attached to the opera, but without dallying too long with these, he presented the letters of recommendation he had been clever enough to obtain at St. Petersburg. Prince Adam Czartoriski received him admirably, and presented him to the king and the most important people about the court. King Stanislaus Augustus, whose tastes were of a literary cast, "took up" the Chevalier de Seingalt at once, patronised him, spent much time in his company,

and gave him, moreover, a present in hard cash—very acceptable just then. The Prince Palatine of Russia also befriended him—possibly from interested motives, as heavy gambling went on at the palace, and the prince and the adventurer were suspected of being confederates. Be this as it may, we find Casanova once more well in funds and playing the grand seigneur after his fashion—that is to say, putting on mighty airs, contradicting and criticising right and left. He deigned to patronise the opera, and as faction ran high concerning the merits of two rival singers, he immediately ranged himself on one side as a violent partisan. The house was divided between the admirers of “the Cataï” and “the Binetti,” both Italians, hating each other with feminine and artistic hatred. Prince Lubomirski, very friendly towards Casanova, headed the Cataï faction, and Count Xavier Branicki, the lord chamberlain, and a distinguished cavalry officer, that of Binetti. Poor Tomatis, the manager of the opera, was driven nearly mad by the applause and hissing, which turned the house into a perfect Babel, and, falling into a dispute with Branicki, had the ill-luck to have his ears boxed by that nobleman’s hussar-orderly. Apparently Casanova took the part of Tomatis, for Branicki seized the first opportunity of insulting him openly. For a wonder, Casanova kept his temper; but the fiery Pole was not to be

appeased, and, calling the unlucky adventurer a "cowardly Venetian," provoked an immediate challenge. This the chamberlain professed to treat with contempt; but the Venetian, who, far from being cowardly, was as brave as a lion, stuck to him pertinaciously, writing letter after letter, first asking politely for the honour of a meeting, and then demanding reparation as a right. Branicki, who preferred fighting to writing, sent him word to come to the theatre and talk it over. With many profound bows, Casanova stated his demand formally, and was met thus :

"Well ! with pleasure ; but are you a gentleman ?"

"Better than that, my lord ; I am acquainted with you."

"I will wager that you have never been out in your life !"

"Never, your excellency."

"Then why the devil begin with me ?"

"Because nobody ever insulted me before."

"Can't the matter be settled ?"

"With anybody else but your excellency I would arrange it with pleasure."

"It is not my custom to shirk a duel, Monsieur Casanova, but I confess that with you . . ."

"I understand. The meeting will honour me more than it will your lordship. That is why I demand it."

“Very well, you must be obeyed. But how, when, and where?”

“Your excellency will arrange all that.”

It was finally settled that the duel should be fought with pistols, and that the chamberlain should convey his opponent to a convenient spot in his carriage. It is a significant fact that Casanova had no second, but was courageous enough to trust himself entirely to the loyalty of his adversary. Like Don Matthias de Silva, Count Branicki objected to fight too early, and Casanova took advantage of this to eat an excellent dinner, on the philosophic principle that it might be his last. At three o'clock Branicki came to fetch him in his travelling carriage, drawn by six horses and escorted by a couple of hussars. Branicki was also accompanied by his aides-de-camp and a general in full uniform as his second. A quarter of an hour brings them to a little wood, the combatants get out, and one of the hussars loads the pistols. Branicki offers the choice of them to his adversary, who seizes his weapon.

“You have chosen a good pistol.”

“I shall try it on your skull,” replies Casanova.

Putting a dozen paces between them, they fire simultaneously; Branicki staggers and falls, and Casanova runs to raise him up, when, to his amazement, he sees the hussars coming down upon him sabre in hand. Luckily their master is strong enough

to shout, "Stop, rascals, and respect Monsieur Seingalt!" Casanova now helps to raise the count, being shot himself in the left hand. Branicki's wound is far more serious—clean through the body, and apparently mortal. They carry the count to an inn, where he says, like a gallant fellow as he is :

"You have killed me. Save your head. You are in the starosty, and I am a grand officer of the crown. Here is my ribbon of the White Eagle as a safeguard and my purse. Make off."

Arriving at Warsaw on a peasant's sledge, the victor was lucky enough to find friends to protect him against the partisans of Branicki, hunting high and low to sacrifice him to their vengeance. The whole affair was a great success for Casanova, who recovered the use of his hand, and speedily had the pleasure of visiting his convalescent adversary. They became excellent friends, and Casanova remained in high favour at court until, in an evil hour, he went away for a few weeks to Kiew, on a visit to the waiwode. On his return he was coldly received everywhere, thanks to his Polish friends having become "posted" concerning his previous exploits in France, England and Italy. Fain would he have departed, shaking the Polish dust from off his feet, but, alas ! he was in debt. At last his departure became no longer optional. One fine morning he received a call from the same general officer

who had "assisted" at the duel. This gentleman brought him an order, "in the king's name," to quit Warsaw within eight days. Utterly disgusted at this affront, he told the general to represent to the king that he was not in a condition to obey, and that, if force were employed, he would protest against it in the face of the civilised world. This was all very well, but the civilised world had had nearly enough of the Chevalier de Seingalt. The general replied, quietly, "Sir, I am not commanded to carry back your reply, but simply to give you the king's orders. Therefore you may do what you please." A long letter to the king produced a better effect. The amiable monarch expressed his regret at being compelled to forego the further society of the Chevalier de Seingalt, but thought he had better go for his own good, as Warsaw was too hot to hold him. This friendly message was accompanied by the solid solatium of a thousand ducats. Stanislaus Augustus let our friend down easily, but was determined to get rid of him at any price.

---

## CHAPTER V.

### OUT OF THE WORLD.

THE fatal command, "Up and begone!" softened by a donation of a thousand ducats from the King

of Poland, proved but the first of a long series of similar affronts—minus the ducats. Even the warmest admirers of adventurous life, and the most able professors of the noble art of living on one's wits, must confess that unless lead, steel, or hemp intervene, a time must come when the best artist will find that he has pretty well covered the map of this world with the fame of his deeds, and, like a Newgate Alexander, must sigh for new worlds to swindle. Now fame is all very well in its way, but this particular kind of fame is more likely than any other to leave its possessor without a shoe to his foot. No sooner does a too-celebrated adventurer arrive in a town than a disposition is shown to kick him out of it, and the slightest pretext suffices for an order to quit, then and there. The ghosts of his misdeeds confront him at every turn. Happy hunting-grounds, once filled with ready dupes, are drawn in vain. The hunter is, alas for him, all too celebrated. The twang of his long-bow is a too familiar sound. Impertinent people tell him with a sneer that he is "known." Let him but clap his hand on his sword, it is enough. Down come the police with the usual chorus, "Up and begone!" and all the work has to be begun over again.

In the smaller German towns Casanova fared not badly after his expulsion from Poland. At Leipzig, Dresden, and Schwerin he came to no particular

grief, and found time to cane an editor at Cologne ; but a slight scrape at Vienna was quite enough to bring the Austrian police down upon him.

Count Schrotenbach sends a messenger to bring the Venetian before him. They jump into Casanova's carriage—he still keeps his carriage—and soon arrive at the governor's office. This gentleman "of remarkable obesity" calls Casanova to him, and showing him a watch, says :

"You see what o'clock it is. Well, if you are inside Vienna at the same hour to-morrow, I will have you flung out of it by my agents."

"What have I done, sir, to bring upon me so severe an order !"

"To begin with, you have no right to ask questions, and I owe you no account of my actions. Nevertheless, I may tell you that you would have been left in peace if you had not infringed the laws of the empire, which forbid games of hazard and send swindlers to the galleys. Do you know this purse ?"

Casanova explains that his purse has been stolen from him. Count Schrotenbach merely laughs and continues :

"I know your inventive genius, and why and how you left Warsaw, so prepare to leave Vienna."

Casanova blusters in vain, and invoking his familiar genius—not Paralis, but Impudence—



writes to Prince Kaunitz, solicits an interview, and is recommended to petition the empress. The Venetian ambassador, of course, will say nothing for an escaped state prisoner. Nevertheless he "falls on his feet" and secures the protection of Count Witzthum, the Saxon envoy, who tells him to write his petition at once. In an ill-inspired moment he pens the following remarkable document :

" TO HER MAJESTY THE EMPRESS-QUEEN. .

" MADAM,—If an insect, about to be crushed by your imperial and royal foot, implored your mercy, I am convinced that your majesty would spare the poor creature. I am that insect, and I entreat you, madam, to order the governor, the Count Schrötembach, to wait but one week before crushing me with your majesty's slipper. At the expiration of that time it is probable that the count would be unable to do me any injury ; it is possible even that at that time your majesty may have withdrawn from him the redoubtable slipper that you have intrusted to him to crush evil-doers, and not an honest and peaceable Venetian, who, notwithstanding his flight from the Piombi, has always respected the laws.

" CASANOVA.

" 21st Jan., 1767."

This extraordinary mixture of impertinence and

servility produces the effect which might have been anticipated. Count Witzthum advising, the Venetian makes off to Augsburg, swearing vengeance against Austria, and resolving to hang one Porchini—to whom he owed the entire “trouble”—with his own hands. Pushing on to Paris, the same “fatality” pursues him. Behold him walking peaceably enough into a concert-room, near the orangery of the Tuileries. He is quite alone, looking somewhat middle-aged, but dressed as gaily as ever, in all the colours of the rainbow. Suddenly he hears his own name, and forgetting the proverb, listens to the conversation between a very young man and a party of ladies. The youth is telling how Casanova has cost him a million, by robbing the late Madame d’Urfé of it—no very great exaggeration if the young gentleman be the heir of that infatuated lady. Casanova goes up to the “calumniator,” threatens to kick him, and makes a scene. Next morning a chevalier of St. Louis waits upon him with an order, “in the king’s name,” to quit Paris in twenty-four hours. The reason assigned is simply the “will and pleasure” of his majesty, and the document concludes with the words, “wherefore, I pray God that he may have you in his Holy keeping.” Furious Casanova obtains a delay of a few days, and then sets off for Spain, well supplied with money, and furnished, moreover, with a letter from the Princess

Lubomirska, a friend of Madame de Romain, to Count Aranda, president of the Council of Castile, and "more of a king than the king himself." To this famous statesman—the expeller of the Jesuits from Spanish soil—a man of the highest capacity, and, moreover, a man of pleasure, but of an exterior absolutely hideous, not to say disgusting, Casanova presents his letter, finding the count at his toilet. Aranda "looks him over" from head to foot, and commences ominously :

"Why have you come to Spain?"

"To acquire information, my lord."

"You have no other object?"

"None—save to put my humble talents at the service of your highness."

"You do not need my protection to live in peace. Attend to the police regulations and nobody will interfere with you. As for employment, apply to your ambassador. It is his business to present you, for we do not know you."

Unfortunate Casanova is driven to explain that he and the Grand Seignior are not on the best of terms, and hears that, in that case, nothing can be done for him. Nothing abashed, he tries the Neapolitan ambassador, the Duke Lassada, favourite of the king, but without avail. They all refer him to the Venetian ambassador. Writing to his friend Dandolo at Venice, for a few lines of recommenda-

tion to Mocenigo, he presents himself in due course, and is received by Gaspardo Soderini, "a man of wit and talent," who at once remarks on the "great liberty" Casanova has taken in appearing before him.

"Don't you know, signor, that you are forbidden to set foot on Venetian territory? Now this embassy is Venetian territory!"

Mocenigo, in fact, is very glad to know him as a private acquaintance, but cannot be brought to recognise him publicly. As usual, Casanova gets into trouble before long, and is locked up at Buen Retiro, but contrives to get out of prison quickly, only to undergo incarceration in the citadel of Barcelona. Shaking Spanish dust off his feet, he again visits Rome, Bologna, and Ancona, but finds that good fortune has left him with his youth. His position in the world is no longer pleasant. Money is getting scarce. His allies and protectors are dead. He is getting old, and finds himself almost at the end of his tether, without profession, position, or capital. The great cities of Europe are closed to him, and the police everywhere on the alert. The great adventurer sees at last the evil of his ways, and determines to strain what little influence he has left to him, to get himself restored to his rights as a Venetian citizen. To this end he fixes his head-quarters at Trieste, and by rendering service to his government, earns various subsidies, in hard cash, and a

small pension. At last his efforts are crowned with success, and in 1775, at the age of fifty, he is permitted to return to Venice.

The life of this extraordinary man now becomes for several years a complete blank. What he did during the eight years between 1775 and 1783, when he again quitted his "ungrateful country," is unknown, save that he wrote a book on the Polish question, then occupying a large space in public opinion. For some unexplained reason he again left Venice, never to return, and as the renown of his exploits had died out or been effaced by those of Cagliostro, he again visited Paris, only to find his former friends dead or poor. Nevertheless, we find him on excellent terms with his countrymen abroad. At dinner one day at the ambassador's he meets a certain Count Waldstein, nephew of the Prince de Ligne, and greatly interested in the magical nonsense, which, thanks to Cagliostro and others, is a common topic of conversation in learned society. Waldstein talks of divination, the key of Solomon Agrippa, and so forth. Casanova bursts out with "Cospetto! to whom do you speak of these matters? To me, Casanova, it is an old story. I know all about it."

Waldstein is delighted to find an adept, and cries, "Come and live with me in Bohemia. I start to-morrow."

At the end of his resources, old, poor, weary of going up and down in the earth, and to and fro in it, the wayworn, battered adventurer jumps at the offer, and is installed as librarian to Count Waldstein at the castle of Dux, near Tœplitz, there to pass, on the modest income of a thousand florins per annum, the last fourteen years of a stormy life. "During six summers," writes the Prince de Ligne, "he made me happy by his wonderful imagination—as lively as if he were but twenty years of age—by his enthusiasm for me, and his agreeable instruction."

It must not be imagined, however, that in the quiet retreat which the kindness of Count Waldstein provided for him the fiery old Italian could not succeed in raising a storm. On the contrary, his vivid imagination and equally lively temper made the castle of Dux almost uninhabitable. To begin with, he could not speak either German or Bohemian, and never wearied of cursing the natives for ignorant barbarians, incapable of appreciating a savant of his rank. Hardly a day passed without an altercation between the steward or some of the servants and the learned librarian. The cook had spoiled his "polenta," or ruined the dish of macaroni he always insisted upon, or burnt his coffee; the chief coachman had given him a rash and careless driver to take him to visit the Prince de Ligne; the dogs had barked during the night and disturbed

his excellency the librarian ; unexpected guests had arrived at the castle, and Casanova had been obliged to dine at a side table ; the hunting-horns had played out of tune ; the parson had tried to convert him ; the count had not met him cordially ; the soup had been served too hot ; the footman had passed him over in serving the wine ; he had not been presented to a person of quality who had come to see the lance which pierced the great Waldstein ; the key of the arsenal had been hidden, out of pure spite ; the count had lent a book without notifying him ; a groom had forgotten to touch his hat to him. The guests, too, were nearly as bad as the servants, and were ill-mannered enough to laugh at the poor old broken-down adventurer, who fancied himself the possessor of the true "grand manner." He tried to speak German rather than remain silent ; but his smooth Venetian tongue floundered over Teutonic gutturals and aspirates. The guests could not understand him ; he got into a passion, and they laughed consumedly. He spouted his French verses—poor old man—and they laughed still more. He gesticulated wildly while declaiming his Italian verses, and they laughed again. On entering a room he made his best bow, still in the grand manner taught him by Marcel, the famous dancing-master, sixty years before, and they laughed still more. He walked through a minuet

according to tradition, and laughter broke out again. He put his white plume in his hat, donned his gold embroidered coat, his ample velvet waistcoat, his garters with paste buckles over his silk stockings, and the rude guests held their sides. "Cospetto!" he roared, "you are all 'canaille;' you are all Jacobins. You insult the count, and the count insults me by not resenting your infamous behaviour." Then he attacked the count himself. "Sir, I have fought and wounded the grand general of Poland. I was not born a gentleman, but I have made myself one." The count laughed—another injury. One fine morning the count enters his room with two pairs of pistols, uttering never a word, and dying to laugh outright. Casanova weeps, embraces him, and cries, "Shall I kill my benefactor? Oh! che bella cosa!" He checks his tears, fancying the count may think he is frightened, accepts the pistols, hands them back, striking an attitude like a dancing-master, weeps again, and talks magic, cabala, and macaroni. Complaints pour in from villagers that the old man is too fond of gossiping with their daughters. The villagers are probably in the right, for we know the customs, not to say manners, of the Signor Casanova, and can picture the wicked old roué tottering about on his high red heels and leering at the country girls with his rheumy eyes, like a superannuated satyr. Bohemian parents understand him not, abhor the



outlandish old rascal, and cry haro upon him. He says they are detestable democrats. He gives a nickname to the neighbouring abbey of Osseg, gets into trouble with the monks, and drags the count into the quarrel. He gives himself indigestion, and complains that he is poisoned. He is thrown out of a carriage, and says it is the work of Jacobins: He gets materials on credit at the count's cloth factory, and says the people are disrespectful when they call for the money.

His deadliest enemy at Dux was a certain Faulkinher, steward of Count Waldstein. This personage, whose name reads like Falconer badly spelt, tried every possible device to get Casanova out of the castle, and led the peppery old fellow a terrible life. The count himself stood by Casanova, so far as reason and common sense would permit, but in his absence his steward "persecuted" the librarian, who was, no doubt, a disagreeable tenant enough.

So long as Casanova drew his salary regularly, he kept his own private table in the count's absence, and paid his way, but a terrible disaster at Leipzig, in which he was concerned, with his publishers, to the extent of four thousand florins, having compelled him to renounce half of his little income, he found it impossible to eat alone in solitary grandeur, and was fain to share the table of the count's upper servants. This was a terrible blow, the more espe-

cially as a stud-groom was admitted to sit near Casanova. This fellow appears to have been of a humorous turn. Stealing a book of Casanova's, he abstracted the portrait frontispiece, enriched it with opprobrious epithets, and stuck it up in the market-place. The storm was tremendous, but the bitterest sarcasms fell blunted from the thick hides of Casanova's tormentors. At last these persecutions wear out his patience. Adopting his usual expression, "It is the will of God," or "God wills it," he declares himself about to quit Dux. He asks the Prince de Ligne for letters of recommendation to the Grand Duke of Weimar, his particular friend ; for the Grand Duchess of Saxe-Gotha, whom he does not know ; and for the Berlin Jews. He sets out on the sly, leaving a farewell letter for Waldstein—tender, proud, candid, and irritated. Waldstein only laughs, and says he will be sure to come back. Forgetting his nearly seventy years, the veteran sets out with all the hopefulness of youth, but is doomed to have his spirits speedily and cruelly dashed. He is kept kicking his heels in ante-chambers. Nobody will give him a place, either as tutor, librarian, or chamberlain ; he says, everywhere, in season, and out of season, that the Germans are a stupid people. The excellent and amiable Grand Duke of Weimar receives him cordially enough, but he immediately becomes jealous of Goethe and Wieland, the famous protégés

of the grand duke, and declaims against them and the literature of the country. At Berlin he thunders against the ignorance, the superstition, and the rascality of the Jews, to whom he is recommended ; but, nevertheless, borrows money of them, and draws bills of exchange on his long-suffering patron, Count Waldstein, who only laughs, pays the money, and embraces the ancient prodigal, when, after six weeks' absence, he comes back to Dux, penitent and proud, laughing and weeping by turns, equally amusing when seriously complaining of his "humiliation," as when pouring out torrents of lively sarcasm on the Tedeschi. Poor old fellow ! He is only too glad to bring back his Herculean frame, his ever-youthful vivacity, his Homeric appetite, and a stock of good stories to tell his friends Waldstein and De Ligne. On their side they are charmed with him, and like him better than ever after that last bath in the rushing tide of the outer world, which has brightened him into a semblance of his former self. All goes smoothly for a week, but, alas ! at the expiration of that period misfortunes and vexations recommence. At dessert there are strawberries. The villanous lackeys, out of spite, hand them to everybody before Casanova, and when the dish reaches him it is empty. Worse than this ; he one morning misses his portrait out of his room, and imagining it to have been carried off by one of his admirers, is in

---

a delightful frame of mind till he finds it nailed up behind a stable-door. .

Thus drag on the dreary years which precede dissolution. In a strange land, far from fallen Venice, her wayward son sinks slowly into the grave, bitterly regretting his once superb physical strength, and occasionally admitting to himself that his life has been made up of splendid opportunities recklessly flung away. About the commencement of the present century he fades out altogether. It is gratifying to find that he made an edifying end.

## COUNT DE BONNEVAL.

It might be thought that between the years 1675 and 1747 Christendom afforded ample scope for adventurous spirits. There was enough, and perhaps more than enough, of fighting, fiddling, financiering, dancing, and duelling. There were wars and rumours of wars; treaties and alliances; schemes for the colonisation of Darien and Mississippi; Banks of England and Banks of France duly established—not without difficulty; there was the South Sea Bubble, and the regency of Philip of Orleans; the speculations of John Law; the struggle over the English, and the war over the Spanish, succession; there was buccaneering in the Western and piracy in the Eastern seas. All of these “institutions” might have been enjoyed in more or less Christian company, but the world which sailed under the Cross was not big enough for one remarkable man—a Frenchman of the French, if ever there were one. Claude Alexandre de Bonneval, the younger son of a noble family—one of the most ancient of the Limousin—sprang from childhood

into youth, at that precise period when the young French nobles were beginning to get tired of Louis the Fourteenth, and the discipline introduced by his ministers. It is more than doubtful whether the French nobility ever cordially acquiesced in the régime of the great Louis. The cheery traditions of the League and the Fronde were yet fresh and green, and French gentlemen, smothered under the asceticism of the last days of a libertine king, sighed for the good old times when they fought freely, and fought "for their own hand." The loathing with which they regarded the reign of Madame de Maintenon is abundantly proved by the greedy haste with which they plunged into the dissipation of the regency. Young De Bonneval was an admirable representative of the generation famous, or rather notorious, for producing the roués of the Temple. As a boy he received, at the hands of the Jesuits, a fair education for that period ; that is to say he acquired some knowledge of Latin and history, afterwards extended by his passion for reading ; but his studies could not have been very far advanced at the age of eleven, when he entered the French navy under the auspices of his relative, the illustrious Tourville. War having broken out in 1688, he figured in the naval battles of Dieppe, La Hogue, and Cadiz ; but just as he was becoming a valuable naval officer, his peculiarity made itself apparent for

the first time. In 1697, it occurred to the Count de Beaumont to treat Bonneval slightly, on account of his youth. The result of this venture was three sword-wounds for Beaumont, and for Bonneval the necessity of leaving the navy. Hereupon he bought a commission in the regiment of Gardes Françaises, and, so far as can be ascertained, dwelt in peace with his brother officers until the War of Succession broke out in 1701, when he purchased for thirty-three thousand livres—about two thousand pounds of our money—the command of a regiment of infantry, and marched into Italy, under the command of the Marshal de Catinat. In the opinion of Sainte-Beuve, the conduct of Bonneval is, throughout his life, consistent in its inconsistency. He always began well. His wit and bravery, his dash and good-humour, his brilliant conversation, and his thorough good-fellowship, made him successful and popular, until, in an evil hour, some indiscretion, some ill-advised joke, or some excessive tenacity on the point of honour, left him friendless and alone to repair his broken fortunes—a task, by the way, to which he proved thoroughly equal on every occasion. Employed in Italy by turns under Catinat, Villeroy, and Vendôme, he became the especial favourite of the latter, whose good and bad qualities he shared to a singular degree. He was evidently not over-particular as to what he

said or what he did, so long as it was in good company. The gloomy Saint-Simon judged him severely : " A younger son of good family, with great talent for war, and plenty of wit, adorned by copious reading, of good address, eloquent, stylish, and graceful—a scamp, a spendthrift, a debauchee, and a plunderer." In the midst of success and popularity came a difficulty like poor Theodore Hook's.—"affection of the chest." There was something wrong in his accounts, in consequence of a difference of opinion respecting the capitulation of Ivrea, between him and the commissary-general of the army. Vendôme, who had approved his conduct in the matter, backed out when it came to the pinch, as boon companions generally do, and, instead of taking the affair in his own hands, recommended him to write to the Secretary of State for War—Chamillart—one of the bourgeois ministers of Louis, upon whom the example of Louvois, in snubbing the military, had not been lost. Bonneval wrote a letter explaining the irregularity—concerning some three thousand livres—at length, but took it into his head to conclude with the following-remarkable paragraph : " I was not aware that an expense incurred with the consent and approbation of Monseigneur the Duc de Vendôme was subject to the revision of a pack of clerks, and rather than submit to it I would pay the money myself." Bonneval forgot the régime under



which he was living. He imagined himself still in the full enjoyment of the rights exercised by his ancestors, under the League and the Fronde. He forgot that Louvois had already ruled the War Department, and that exalted rank and daring bravery were no longer excuses for disobedience and inaccuracy. Brought up in the school of Vendôme, he was slow in accepting the new doctrine of discipline, and marred his career by his inability to read the signs of the times.

Chamillart, stung by the scornful reference to men of the pen, and "having a true bourgeois feeling for honesty," replied in a style which is the best possible proof that the feudal nobles had had their day: "Sir,—I have received the letter you took the trouble to write me on the subject of the Biella accounts. If the sum in question had been truly employed, you would not offer to reimburse it at your own cost; and as you are not a sufficiently great lord to make presents to the king, it seems to me that you wish to avoid reckoning with clerks, because they know too well how to reckon." As the Prince de Ligne remarks: "This was more than was wanted to make an impetuous man like Bonneval spring off the hinges." Without a moment's reflection, he sat down and wrote the following fatal epistle: "Sir,—I have received the letter you took the trouble to write me, in which you inform

me that I fear clerks because they know too well how to reckon. It is my duty to inform you that the great nobles of the kingdom sacrifice willingly their lives and their property in the king's service, but that we owe him nothing so far as our honour is concerned. Thus, if within three months I do not receive reasonable satisfaction for the affront you have put upon me, I shall enter the service of the emperor, wherein all the ministers are people of quality, and know how to treat their equals." This letter, threatening nothing short of desertion to the enemy, was no sooner gone than Bonneval, fearing arrest, asked the Duc de Vendôme for leave, and travelled in Italy for several months in 1705-6. He remained for some time at Venice, in the hope that some loophole would be made for him to return to his duty, but was bitterly disappointed at finding no pretext for repentance. At last poverty and mortification induced him to put his threat into execution. He went over to the enemy, then commanded by Prince Eugène in March, 1706—shortly after the desertion of the French flag by the Marquis de Langallerie, who, being a French lieutenant-general, passed with the same grade into the service of the Emperor. This Langallerie is the same who became so well known by his project of reuniting the scattered fragments of the Jewish people into a nation—a curious specimen of a baron of

Saintonge, successively a soldier of France, the Empire, Poland, Hesse-Cassel, and, it is said, of Turkey, by turns a Catholic and a fervent Lutheran—and who was arrested on the brink of a great enterprise, whether to take the Jews back to Jerusalem or to help the Grand Turk to capture Italy is not clearly known. Whatever the project may have been, it was crushed by the emperor, who had Langallerie arrested and immured in the castle of Raab, where he soon died of grief and a fever. The Prince de Ligne makes light of the crime of desertion in the days of Bonneval, and points out that not long before Condé and Turenne had done the same thing; but Saint-Simon speaks of it with truly modern horror. Prince Eugène, however, welcomed the deserter warmly, employed him in several campaigns, and at once obtained for him the rank of major-general. In this capacity he served in the attack on the lines of Turin, and made a brilliant success, the French army being routed and forced to repass the Alps. In the battle the Marquis de Bonneval, the elder brother of the count, was taken prisoner, and would have been sabred at once by the Hungarian “heyducks” who had taken him, had not Bonneval arrived just in time to save him. Serving brilliantly at Tortona and elsewhere, Bonneval was high in favour at the conclusion of the war by the treaty of Utrecht.

Pending the negotiations he contrived to distinguish himself in another way. He dispelled the dulness of existence by insisting to Lord Stafford that Louis the Fourteenth aspired to universal monarchy, and by fighting a Frenchman who felt aggrieved at that statement, and a Prussian who repeated it, coupled with improper expressions regarding the great king. Rash and inconsiderate as he was, Bonneval seems yet to have retained the favour of his chiefs, as, on the accession of Charles the Sixth to the empire, he obtained the grade of lieutenant-general, and one of the most ancient regiments in the Imperial army; and two years later became a member of the Aulic Council of War at Vienna. War now broke out between Austria and Turkey, the latter power having attacked the Morea, ceded to the republic of Venice by the treaty of Carlowitz. The Venetians called upon the emperor to carry out the terms of the alliance between the two powers, and, after a few fruitless attempts to preserve peace, Charles declared war against the Sublime Porte. It was in this war that Prince Eugène acquired his brightest renown. Under his command Bonneval distinguished himself at the battle of Peterwaradein by his desperate bravery, and received a wound which compelled him to wear an iron bandage for the rest of his life. His renown reached France, no longer the France of Louis the Fourteenth. The old king was dead,

and the regent Orleans ruled in his stead. Nothing was so much *à la mode* as to undo anything done during the late gloomy times, and therefore, as Bonneval had been disgraced by the old priest-ridden king, nothing could be in better taste than to welcome the prodigal back to a country where all were prodigals for a while. The regent made no difficulty about according letters of remission to Bonneval, who, having obtained leave from the emperor, reappeared in Paris, not as a pardoned deserter, but as a hero, whom every one but the grim Saint-Simon was delighted to honour. The formal confirmation of his letters of pardon by the parliament of Paris was rather a triumph than a penance, as, instead of being, like other criminals, seated on the stool of repentance, he was accorded by the First President, on account of his wound, a velvet cushion. Tall, handsome, with a gay and martial air, with hair cut in a fashion of his own—odd enough then, but closely resembling the style of to-day—Bonneval had grace, style, and an excessively free and outspoken manner; in fact, he was a perfect cavalier, well fitted by nature and art to become the fashion at Paris in the year 1717. He became the fashion accordingly, and the happy instant—as it seemed to them—was seized upon by his family to marry him. He was forty-two years old, and at the height of his reputation. “Why

should he not marry?" said his mother, the excellent dowager Marchioness de Bonneval, and it speaks well for De Bonneval, and for the filial instinct of Frenchmen generally, that his ungovernable soul bent at his mother's wish. Personally he abhorred wedlock, and told his brother and his sister-in-law, "My mother is mad to make me take a wife; if she persists, I will not promise not to save all leave-taking by starting for Germany the day after the wedding." But the marchioness was obstinate, and as persistent as old ladies are apt to be when they happen to be mothers and Frenchwomen. She had not only made up her mind that her son should marry, but had decided upon the young lady. Mademoiselle Judith de Biron was one of the twenty-six children of the Marquis de Biron, then grand equerry, and afterwards duke, and peer, and marshal of France, who enjoyed the particular favour of the regent—and indeed must have needed it sorely, with such an extensive family to provide for. All was arranged for the marriage, when, at the last moment, the Marchioness de Bonneval showed herself to be truly the mother of her eccentric son by "bolting" from the Hôtel de Biron, and taking refuge with the Duc de Bethune, who had a terrible time of it, before he could bring the old lady back to a sense of duty and the Hôtel de Biron. The marriage turned out badly, as might

have been expected. On the day after the ill-omened union, the Marchioness de Biron and her new son held a noteworthy conversation. The mother-in-law caught Bonneval looking gloomy and listless, and attacked him with various and sundry of the pleasantries proper, no doubt, to the occasion, and suitable to the taste of the time. The reply was disconcerting in the extreme.

"The fact is," quoth Bonneval, seriously, "I am devilish sorry I got married." This was a pleasant speech to make to a mother-in-law, and shows the fearless nature of the man.

"You should have said so yesterday," replied the old lady, drily, and the scene ended. Bonneval, however, if easy to catch, was hard to hold. Even the golden chains of wedlock were as green withes to this Gallo-Imperial-Tartar. No man was ever less married than he. Ten days after the ceremony he returned to Hungary, abandoning his wife, whom he never saw again. She was worthy of a better fate. In the odd society of two mad old marchionesses and a feather-headed soldier, stands out clear and bright against the dark background of regency manners and regency morals, the figure of this pure and affectionate woman—a widowed bride. She was emphatically what the French call a "beautiful soul." She was unfortunate enough to love her husband, and to be proud of him. Nothing can be

more affecting than the perusal of her letters to that agreeable scapegrace, who, by-the-way, rarely answered them. In every line of these beautiful epistles appear her abiding love for Bonneval; her pride and sympathy in his, just then, glorious career; her tender solicitude and anxiety for his safety. During the campaign of 1717 she writes: "My anxiety increases every day, like your inexactitude, and I am as persistent in tormenting myself as you are in neglecting me. Although I have reason to believe that no misfortune has happened to you—as nobody has told me of anything of the kind—I cannot refrain from adding to my grief a thousand alarms, which throw me into a state you will not understand, since you can remain two months without giving me the least sign of life. From this I ought to conclude that the marks of my affection touch you but little; it is, however, of a nature to hope for a happier fate. Thus, being unable to change my heart, I must conform to your maxims, which are, perhaps, to love in silence." Addressing him at first as "My dear Master," she at length, discouraged by his neglect, and fearing to weary him by her tender letters, falls back upon their relationship, and calls him "My dear Cousin," as if a nearer and dearer name were forbidden her. After a year of separation she writes: "I cannot wish you the power of knowing what your absence makes me



suffer ; and if I could show you what passes in my heart, I would not do so, for fear that pity would excite a tenderness which I desire for myself alone. I must confess that the heart which outlives indifference is sorely tried. I bear the burden, but yet I cannot complain. My own tenderness for you compensates me in some degree for the condition in which I exist, and which would be insupportable if I were not sustained by the remembrance of my past happiness—the cause of my present misery. No, I will not complain, for although I am utterly and frightfully wretched, I cannot regret the tranquillity of my former life. I care for nothing on earth but your love. . . . I fear always that glory is a redoubtable rival to me. However, it seems to me that we ought to balance your heart, and that when glory calls upon you to expose your life, I ought to make you take all permissible precautions for its preservation. Reflect upon this, my dear master, that my sole ambition is to preserve you, as you alone can make me happy. To-day I can only talk to you of myself, for I think only of you, and all else becomes insupportable. I kiss you with all my heart, and would buy with the half of my life the happiness of this letter.” The effect of these charming letters upon Bonneval was a profound esteem for his wife—of whom he always spoke in the highest terms—an indisposition to answer her, and a resolution

to keep at a distance. The rather one-sided correspondence continued till he took the turban, when his wife all at once left off writing; and it is curiously characteristic of him that he then complained bitterly of her neglect, and wanted to know what he had done that she should leave off writing to him. On Madame de Bonneval being informed of this, she wrote him one more letter, which is unfortunately lost. While this pure and gentle woman was wearing out her heart of gold, in vain regrets for the dashing soldier who loved and rode away, that hero was rapidly ascending the ladder of fame. Promoted on his arrival at Vienna to the grade of general of infantry, he set off at once to serve in the army of Prince Eugène, who opened the campaign with the siege of Belgrade, celebrated in story and in song. Bonneval exhibited wondrous valour, and military talent of that instantaneous kind which resembles inspiration. He was again wounded, but the town was taken and the Porte sued for peace, which was concluded in 1718 at Passarowitz. Shortly afterwards he took Messina, and, when tranquillity reigned in Europe, it seemed that he had nothing more left to do, except to enjoy his brilliant position, to wait for the command of the imperial armies—which could hardly fail to be his one day—and, perhaps one may think, to send for his wife. None of these ideas occurred to Bonneval, who, at

the age of forty-four, appears to have been that supremely ridiculous personage — a middle-aged young man, encouraging around him a knot of wild dogs, who made Vienna unsafe for peaceable citizens after dark. German fun has never seemed very funny to other nations, and at the period in question it took the form of upsetting sedan-chairs, cutting the cables of the vessels moored in the Danube, and other horse-play equally humorous. Bonneval, whose general habits fitted him better for a camp than a city, fell in with the mad humour of these wags, and being of a frank, easy, and lovable nature, made many dangerous friends. He consorted with poets rather than with priests; went oftener to the cabaret than to mass; had songs written about him; and at last, such is the influence of evil communications, took to writing verses himself. This was his ruin. For a long while there had been a coolness between him and his old patron and commander, Prince Eugène. In fact, the prince, who had been a wild wassailer in his day, was growing old, and, bowed down by the weight of honours, was disposed to forget that he had once been conveyed to the guardhouse with the insignia of the Golden Fleece upon him. A species of gloomy fanaticism of the Spanish kind was in vogue at Vienna, against which the life led by Bonneval was an extravagant protest. The Frenchman now made

a decided blunder. Being a member of the Aulic Council of War, of which Prince Eugène was president, he took it upon himself to remonstrate with him touching the influence which the Countess Batthyany exercised over him in disposing of patronage. Bonneval was naturally irritated at seeing the creatures of the countess promoted over the heads of gallant but scampish officers of his acquaintance, but the prince never forgave him. More than this, he told the countess, who determined that he should not forget. Enraged at further slights, Bonneval produced a copy of verses satirising the venal followers of the prince, to whom it was at once pointed out that to attack his creatures was only to attack himself indirectly. Bonneval's faithful wife heard of his danger, and wrote: "I have been much pained by the reports circulated here touching your quarrel with Prince Eugène . . . When our friends become our enemies they are, I think, most dangerous." Feminine instinct proved unerring. Bonneval was obliged to leave Vienna, and to take his regiment into garrison at Brussels, where we find him in 1724, rather gouty, but leading a joyous life, at suppers and concerts, until he got into a fatal scrape with the governor, the Marquis de Prié. It is almost incredible, unless we take Bonneval's peculiar character into consideration, that a nobleman, a distinguished commander, and a man of the world,

should, on the verge of his fiftieth birthday, have been absurd enough to get into serious trouble anent a silly piece of gossip about the young Queen of Spain. The Marchioness de Prié and her daughter had been talking scandal about this little Queen Elizabeth, the daughter of the late regent Orleans, when Bonneval (who' hated the governor as a creature of Prince Eugène) suddenly discovered that he was allied to the royal family of France through the houses of Foix and Albret ; that the Queen of Spain was therefore, a kind of cousin of his ; and that he was bound to espouse her quarrel. Hereupon he defied De Prié, whose sole answer was to send him under a guard of fifty dragoons to Antwerp, and to lock him up in the citadel. Hence he wrote to everybody, and appealed to everybody ; declared the question of discipline insignificant ; and once more delivered himself of that creed of persons of quality with which he had whilom favoured Chamillart—"Persons of my birth have three masters : God, their honour, and their sovereign. We owe to the last no service which could offend the two first." In other words this is an appeal to what is called, even to this day, a "higher law," and means, in plain language, that the writer intends to do exactly what pleases himself. To improve matters, he sent a species of cartel to Prince Eugène, and after intriguing for awhile at the Hague, whither he betook

himself after leaving the citadel at Antwerp, went on to Vienna, to meet the charges against him. Here he was arrested again, and being brought before the Council of War at the instance of Prince Eugène, was imprisoned for a year in a fortified town, after which he went to Venice, the fatal theatre of his first desertion.

There can be hardly two opinions as to the treatment experienced by Bonneval at the hands of the emperor. A distinguished general officer, the hero of many daring exploits, he found himself, in his declining years, exiled and disgraced for a crime which injured nobody. His letters to the Marquis de Prié and to Prince Eugène were offensive beyond doubt, but the crime of constructive insubordination could barely justify the Empire in casting off a faithful servant—so poor in circumstances that, after a short stay in Venice, he had scarcely the means of subsistence.

At the end of his resources, without cash, credit, or any character (except for courage) to speak of, our elderly *viveur* found himself absolutely under the necessity of again taking service under some flag or other. Commencing to intrigue with Spain, he received friendly notice from the Imperial ambassador—at a masquerade, of all places in the world—to be careful what he wrote and said, as it would be easy for the emperor to have him kidnapped from a

town like Venice ; and moreover, that if he could only keep himself quiet, his quarrel with Prince Eugène could be easily made up, and his return to Vienna assured. It was the misfortune of Bonneval, who ordinarily exhibited an open trustful nature, to doubt the sincerity of this intimation. He, generally so brave, saw only a threat, and cast about for a place of safety. Switzerland was hardly safe, nor Holland either ; he was not rich enough to live in London, according to his rank ; and at last pitched upon Constantinople as the safest refuge. At Bosnia Serai, a frontier fortress belonging to the Turks, he was recognised by a major in the Austrian service, who had come over from Essek on some business connected with his regiment. This major lost no time in denouncing him to the commandant of the place, and protested formally against his being allowed to enter Turkey or the Turkish service. Bonneval was at once put under arrest, but treated otherwise civilly enough, by the pacha in command, who, however, persisted in detaining him, the thrashings that he had helped Prince Eugène to give the Turks having made them unusually subservient to the wishes of the Imperial Court. At last Austria formally demanded, through its ambassador at Constantinople, the extradition of Bonneval, and laid schemes for carrying him off from Bosnia Serai, "dead or alive." After fourteen months of deten-

tion on the frontier, where he endeared himself to the Corps of Janissaries, Bonneval received the fatal news that the Porte had decided upon his extradition. This meant—at least Bonneval thought so—death, or, worse still, a life in prison, and determined him to play his last card. He took the turban, to the delight of the pacha, who embraced him “with effusion.” Two days later arrived the formal order of extradition, which it was then impossible to obey. Bonneval was a Turk, duly proclaimed and recognised, was backed by several thousand janissaries, and, as a convert, could not be given up to his enemies. Probably the Turks were very glad to get so excellent a soldier on such easy terms, and Bonneval does not appear to have regretted a decision which, in his own opinion, was forced upon him by the virulence of the Viennese, and the apathy of the French ambassador. Elevated to the rank of pacha, he lived as a Turk for seventeen years in great honour and consideration. He said, indeed, that it was only in Turkey that he received Christian treatment. Oddly consoling himself with the reflection that he was now as good a Turk as ever he had been a Christian, he accommodated himself well enough to his new mode of life, but there are yet indications that, from time to time, he felt strange yearnings for civilised life. His contempt for the Turks, who were deaf to his projects for remodelling their army,



was immense. At last his good-humoured toleration of them turned to disgust, and he opened negotiations with his brother the marquis to make his peace with Rome, and assist his escape from Islam. These plans were cut short by his death—of gout—on the 23rd March, 1747, the anniversary of the birth of Mohammed, as is set forth in the epitaph of Achmet Pacha, sometime Count de Bonneval.

## JOHN LAW.

ONE of the most widely spread and extraordinary delusions of the present day, is that the mania for speculation, the insane haste to get rich, at whatever risk, is a new thing, the offspring of modern education, modern materialism, modern worldliness, and the rest of it. Those philosophers who never shine to such great advantage as when denouncing the vileness of the present age, tell us roundly enough that we are given over entirely to Mammon; that the lust of gold fills our corrupt hearts; that the spirit of the age is not that of a trader, but of a gambler; that, instead of working patiently and well for a modest wage, after the manner of our respectable ancestors, we want to "get rich all at once;" that to achieve this objection we stick at nothing, and are prepared to risk not only our own property (if we happen to have any), but that of our wives, children, parents, and friends. Perhaps the great body of my country folk like this chastening discourse, and as a prosperous, pampered, and overfed generation, feel that it acts upon them as

a species of moral tonic—restoring them to-day, and stringing up their nerves for fresh iniquities to-morrow. I confess that so long as the whole generation is abused collectively, I do not find these jeremiads unpalatable—it is only when they are applied too exactly to individuals that they become nauseous; but yet I cannot but feel it my duty, after having the worship of the True—with a big T—dinned into my ears for a quarter of a century, to rise up and testify also. I fear we are in a bad way, but am consoled by finding that the prophets, and teachers, and moralists have said the same thing of every generation which has existed under the sun, and that the eagerness to become suddenly rich, which is assumed to be the besetting sin of these latter days, is as old as humanity itself. Without referring to those antique Romans who were possessed with the accursed thirst of gold, and hungered for the cash of others, because they were profuse of their own, I can cite abundant instances of the haste of our own respectable ancestors to get rich—anyhow. In the later Stuart and earlier Hanoverian days, sober merchants invested their cash in privateering, buccaneering, or piratical expeditions, as did their successors in smuggling ventures, and when piracy became slack, plunged heavily into South Sea, Darien, and other schemes. The titled classes preferred simple gaming, and at

hombre, faro, basset, and other ingenious games contrived to win and lose fortunes in gratifying their tastes ; and no sooner was a gentleman completely cleaned out, than he took as naturally to the road as his descendant does to the City, and “ flashed,” or did not “ flash the muzzle,” on the “ high toby spice ” with as much grace as the out-at-elbows aristocrat of to-day displays in the noble career of a “ guinea-pig,” or “ straw ” director of a joint-stock company.

It is hardly necessary to insist upon the elementary proposition that the acquisitive instincts of man must be satisfied, and that when buccaneering went out of fashion he had but the option of piracy or stock-jobbing ; but I am compelled to add that, in addition to the simple desire of man for that which “ isn’t his’n,” there is a nobler feeling when a certain personal risk is involved in the capture. It is the element of chance—the gambling fibre in the trader—which lends to financial speculations an invincible attraction. In the middle ages it was unnecessary to step beyond legitimate trade to enjoy all the emotions of the gamester. There was plenty of excitement in the ordinary course of business. Every venture was a desperate cast. It was long odds against the arrival of any cargo anywhere. If life was unsafe, property in transit was worth very little indeed.

On leaving the harbour of Constantinople or Trebizond, argosies had not very far to travel to Venice, Genoa, or Marseilles ; but the vessels were crazy, the mariners of the true Mediterranean breed, and the sea was thick with pirates of all sorts and nationalities. In the land journey across the Continent almost equal dangers were encountered. Emperors and kings, dukes and princes, taxed and tolled without mercy, and lesser potentates eked out their more slender rights by the strong hand, and either plundered merchants outright, or levelled heavy black-mail on them. Added to these foreseen dangers were the chances of war breaking out suddenly, and stopping operations altogether ; of the imposition of embargoes, to prevent the scarcity of certain commodities ; and the plunder of authorised and unauthorised persons. Taking all these risks together, the wonder is, not that commerce was restricted, but that any existed at all ; and the fact that bales of sweet almonds, tuns of Bordeaux wine, and silks from the far East reached this country, reflects immense credit upon the enterprise of the commercial world of that day. The profits of the olden time must have been enormous to cover the risk, and probably this wide margin explains the immense fortunes realised by Jacques Coeur, the Fuggers, and the great families of Venice and Genoa. A voyage was, as it was called, a "venture," which

would make either "men or mice" of the adventurers. During these speculative and exciting times, the invention of bills of exchange and the establishment of the two great banks—that of St. George, at Genoa, and the bank of Amsterdam—had to a certain degree spoiled brigandage as a regular profession, by rendering the frequent transfer of hard cash less necessary, but, by the introduction of paper money, provided a great opportunity for the daring spirits of the future. The great banks of Genoa and Amsterdam were founded on the confidence of merchants in each other, and their dread of other members of the community. The banks of England and of France were called into existence by the wants of the Government, and in the latter case supplied an extraordinary medium for speculation. In England, William Paterson, and in France, John Law, achieved celebrity in the world of finance by successes and failures which bear an extraordinary resemblance to each other. Law's *Banque Générale*, if it had been left alone, might have proved as successful as its Genoese, Dutch, and English predecessors; the Mississippi scheme was an after-thought, like Paterson's Darien project, and the famous South Sea Bubble. Paterson's scheme, however, differed from those of Law and Sir John Blunt, in being independent of any alliance with a royal, national, or joint-stock bank; nor must it be confounded with

the schemes for establishing land banks, which occupied the attention of such enthusiasts as John Briscoe and Hugh Chamberlayne, whom Lord Macaulay dubs, "two projectors worthy to have been members of that academy which Gulliver found at Lagado." The project of the two latter was to restore commerce and prosperity by issuing enormous quantities of notes on landed security. The doctrine of the projectors was that every person who had real property ought to have, besides that property, paper money to its full value. "Thus, if his estate was worth two thousand pounds, he ought to have his estate and two thousand pounds in paper money. Both Briscoe and Chamberlayne treated with the greatest contempt the notion that there could be an over-issue of paper as long as there was, for every ten-pound note, a piece of land in the country worth ten pounds. Nobody, they said, would accuse a goldsmith of over-issuing, so long as his vaults contained guineas and crowns to the full value of all the notes which bore his signature." Indeed, it was added, no goldsmith (the original banker) had in his vaults guineas and crowns to the full value of his paper. In these theories, which were pushed to an extravagant length, it is easy to discern the germ of the modern *Crédits Fonciers*, which hitherto have perhaps hardly proved an unmixed benefit to mankind. They met with some

favour during the reign of William and Mary, and though believed to be merely started by Tory politicians as rivals to the Bank of England—a Whig “institution”—a charter of incorporation was granted to the Land Bank, which, loved by the Tory country gentlemen who wanted to borrow money, would perhaps have been looked kindly upon by the Whig merchants, who were prepared to lend it, had it not been at once apparent that it was intended to ruin the Whig bank. As a matter of fact, the Land Bank did not float. All present interest in the long-forgotten scheme centres in the fact that it contained the germ of modern financial expedients, and was, under slightly different forms, advocated by William Paterson, the founder of the Bank of England, and by John Law, who first gave a bank to France.

The latter celebrated Scotchman stands alone as a type of the speculator. He was not a merchant like Paterson, a downright quack like Saint-Germain, or a gambler and intriguer like Casanova, but combined in a higher degree all these qualities. To begin with, John Law of Lauriston was a gentleman of landed property. His father, a man of good family, in the language of the day was a goldsmith—a trade which combined the functions of banking and exchange. Amassing a large fortune, he purchased the domains of Raudleston and Lauris-



ton, the latter of which passed to his eldest son. On the side of his mother, Jean Campbell, he was descended from the celebrated house of Argyll. On the death of his father, John Law, he, then aged fourteen, and his younger brother, William, were left to the care of their mother, who appears to have spared no pains in educating them as accomplished gentlemen of the time. John pursued his studies at Edinburgh, and made rapid progress in the "humanities," until the bent of his genius towards the exact sciences declared itself. So far as mathematical science had advanced he mastered it; and, moreover, studied with avidity its application to the principles of public and private credit, the state of trade and manufactures, the theory and practice of taxation, and, in short, all that was known of political economy. Born in 1671, young Law found himself, on coming of age, not only an elegant scholar and mathematician, but the best tennis-player and swordsman, the handsomest man, and the finest gentleman in Edinburgh. Apparently the earliest application of his aptitude for finance consisted in borrowing money to satisfy his elegant tastes, as we find him, very shortly after making his *début* in London, conveying the fee of Lauriston to his mother, Jean Campbell, who undertook to pay his debts and preserve the property; all of which she did by degrees, and as rapidly as her son's continued

demands for cash on account, and in advance, would permit her. In London, young Law's good looks, ready wit, and "noble" manner brought him plenty of friends of both sexes. The handsome young Scotchman was ardently admired by the ladies of fashion, and made an excellent impression upon the wits and beaux of the Mall, who were enchanted at having found a gambler who never flinched nor lost his temper. Unfortunately for Law, one of his numerous intrigues led to a duel between him and a Mr. Edward Wilson, of Keythorpe, in Bloomsbury Square, on the 9th April, 1694, when Mr. Wilson was killed on the spot. The death of this gentleman, nicknamed Beau Wilson, occasioned unusual excitement. The trial lasted long, and Law's friends of quality stood by him staunchly ; but for all that he was found guilty of murder, and sentence of death was passed on him on the 20th April, 1694. Justice having thus asserted itself, and public opinion being satisfied by the verdict of the jury, Law received a pardon from the crown ; but an appeal being lodged by a brother of the deceased, he was detained in the King's Bench prison till the following January, when he escaped to the Continent. During the next few years he visited Amsterdam, Paris, Venice, Genoa, Florence, Naples, and Rome, studying by the way the commercial customs and finances of these places, and devoting

particular attention to the great banks of Genoa and Amsterdam ; but at this period of his life he was only potentially a financier, and actually the greatest gambler in Europe. By calculating the chances at faro, and keeping the bank himself, he had succeeded in making gambling a very lucrative profession, his power of calculation and his imperturbable calmness giving him immense superiority over rash "punters," oppressed by the dream of breaking the bank. About the year 1700 he returned from exile and published his "Proposals and Reasons for constituting a Council of Trade" at Edinburgh in the following year. Encouraged by the success of this work, he, in 1705, offered to Parliament a plan for removing the difficulties under which Scotland then laboured from the great scarcity of specie. In his "Money and Trade Considered, with a Proposal for Supplying the Nation with Money," Law proceeds with a complete forecast of the *Crédit Foncier* schemes—the circulation of notes secured upon land. This scheme was, although it secured many followers, finally rejected by Parliament, the House passing a resolution "that to establish any kind of paper credit, so as to oblige it to pass, was an improper expedient for the nation." Disappointed at the evil reception of his most cherished schemes, Law, about 1707, forsook ungrateful Scotland and took up his quarters for

some time at Brussels, where his success at play made him conspicuous. During two excursions made to Paris his good fortune was still more remarkable. He made a faro bank at the best houses—such as the Hôtel de Gesvres, Rue des Poulies, and at the houses of great financiers like Poisson, who lived in the Rue Dauphine, but his favourite haunt was the house of La Duclos, a tragic actress, then greatly in fashion. To the two first-named houses, whither he was invited to make a bank on festive occasions as a favour to both host and guest, he invariably took two bags of gold containing between them about a hundred thousand livres, representing, as this occurred before the coinage was finally debased, about seven thousand pounds sterling. Finding gold cumbrous in paying heavy stakes, Law had counters struck of the value of eighteen louis d'or each. The bank won heavily—so much, indeed, as to occasion an outcry of foul play, which even Saint-Simon, who loved neither the Duke of Orleans, his Scottish protégé, nor their ways, treats with contempt. The truth seems to have been that the Parisians were jealous of the foreigner of “noble manners,” who won their ladies' hearts and their own money with such grace, elegance, and rapidity. The mean expedient familiar to Continental nations was resorted to, M. d'Argenson, lieutenant-general of police, ordering Mr. Law to leave Paris in twenty-

four hours. He was in similar style hounded out of Genoa and Turin, and compelled to take refuge in Hungary and in Germany, where, for several years, he continued to accommodate persons of distinction by making a faro bank upon occasion. At the end of a few years of this life he had become the friend not only of the Duke of Orleans, but of the Grand Prior of Vendôme, who adored him, patronised him, and borrowed money of him with royal grace. The Prince de Conti, the Duke of Burgundy (grandson of Louis the Fourteenth), and Victor Amadeus, King of Sardinia, were also friends of the Chevalier, as Law was not unfrequently called. Hand in glove with these great personages, lending money to some, gambling and consorting with all, he was, when in his forty-fourth year he heard of the death of Louis the Fourteenth, one of the highest in favour with the Regent Orleans, and was, besides, possessed of what is far better than the favour of princes—a solid capital of one hundred and ten thousand pounds sterling.

While Law had been leading a joyous life elsewhere, France had been going to the dogs. The reign of Louis the Fourteenth—the sun which rose brightly enough from the mirk of the Fronde more than half a century before—had set amid gloom and penance, defeat and disaster, bankruptcy and beggary. During the last fourteen years of the old

king's reign the expenses had absorbed two milliards eight hundred and seventy millions of livres, while the actual receipts had produced only eight hundred and eighty millions. The national debt, therefore, amounted to two milliards of livres, or about one hundred and forty-two millions sterling—an enormous sum for that period. Part of this amount had been consolidated in perpetual or life annuities, or paid in notes analogous to Exchequer bills. From these expedients arose a floating debt which, when the king died in 1715, formed an arrear of seven hundred and eleven millions of livres, while the deficit already incurred for the current year was seventy-eight millions. The treasury was empty. The salaries of public servants were so much in arrear that they stole more than ever, to make up the deficiency. Winter was only beginning, but people had already died of cold and hunger in Paris itself, while the famished provincials clamoured against a taxation which ground them to the earth. It was clear that something must be done, and the first suggestion was a national bankruptcy. This advice was abhorrent to the regent, and, after a stormy meeting of the council, it was determined that a revision of the State debts should take place. This, like most measures of a similar kind, signified a partial confiscation of the property of State creditors. Six hundred and fifty-two millions of debts

were paid off with two hundred and fifty millions of State-notes, bearing interest at four per cent. This reduction, however, affords no adequate measure of the loss inflicted upon the holders of French securities, for, as the public had no guarantee against the abuse of "revision," the new securities fell the first day forty per cent. ; so that, in the end, the possessor of a hundred francs in paper, on the death of Louis the Fourteenth, could not have got for its representative State-note more than twenty francs in specie. Other expedients were tried. It was attempted to derive a profit by debasing the coinage to the extent of forty-three per cent. ; but this scheme proving a failure, it was determined to establish a "visa" or inspection into the means of those who had made fortunes out of the wars of the late reign. The "visa" was simply a revival of a good old custom of the dark ages. Scores of wealthy persons were arrested at once, and compelled to give an account of their dealings with the Government for the last twenty-seven years. An army of informers started into existence, and a gigantic spoliation took place. The men of business, who had made immense fortunes by Government contracts, and especially by farming the taxes, had no friends. The people hated them as oppressors, and the nobility envied them their wealth and sumptuous style of living, which threw dukes and

peers of France into the shade. They were compelled to disgorge a portion of their wealth. Samuel Bernard, the great financial power of Europe, paid about six hundred thousand pounds in hard cash, and Crozat—of whom more anon—escaped for two-thirds of that sum ; but, as is invariably the case, the big brass pots came off the best, the smaller earthen ones being, in many cases, broken up altogether. To satisfy the people—howling for victims—some unhappy speculators were put in the pillory, and others immured in the Bastille. It was the old persecution of the Jews and Lombards over again. The brutal expedient was, however, a complete failure. Four thousand four hundred and ten persons were condemned in various amounts, descending as low as one thousand livres. The total amount squeezed out of them amounted—on paper—to two hundred and nineteen millions ; but not the half of this sum ever reached the Exchequer. Every victim, who had a friend at court, applied for a remission of his fine to the lords, or, better still, to the ladies in power. M. Crochut tells an amusing anecdote of an individual who, being fined twelve hundred thousand livres, received a visit from a nobleman who promised to have it cancelled for a perquisite of three hundred thousand. “ Upon my honour, count,” said the victim, “ you have come



too late ; I have just made a bargain with the countess for half the money."

In the midst of this financial storm, Law appeared on the scene, not as a needy adventurer, eager to make something, but as the fortunate magician, whose touch converted all things into gold : as a philanthropist who, having all the wealth he coveted, was only anxious to serve France in general, and his friend the Regent in particular. As early as the 24th of October, 1715, only two months after the death of the old king, the plans of the reformer were submitted to the Council of the Regency. At this time they took the form of a Royal Bank, and were defeated by a majority of the Council. The Duke of Saint-Simon was one of their opponents. In his opinion, "An establishment of this sort may be good in itself ; but it is only so in a republic or in a monarchy like England, whose finances are controlled by those alone who furnish them, and who only furnish so much as they please. But in a state which is weak, changeable, and more than absolute, like France, stability must necessarily be wanting to it ; since a king, or in his name a mistress, a minister, or favourite, or, still more, such extreme necessities as we find in the years 1707 to 1710, may overthrow the Bank. The temptation would be too great, and the operation too easy."

Law was thus thrown out of his original plan of

a National Bank, and fell back upon that of a private bank, composed entirely of funds subscribed by himself, and those who chose to share in the undertaking. Letters patent, authorising the formation of a "General Bank," were issued and registered by the Parliament in the month of May, 1716. The bank was immediately formed, with a capital of six millions, divided into twelve hundred shares of five thousand livres each, payable in four instalments, a fourth part in specie, and three-fourths in State-notes. All regulations were to be decided on at a general meeting of shareholders. The statutes of the bank only authorised it to issue notes payable at sight, and to the bearer; to discount commercial paper and bills of exchange; to receive on deposit money of private individuals; to make payments, minus a very small commission, and give receipts for merchants, either in money or by the transfer of account; and to supply, at the current rate of exchange, bills payable at sight on the managers of the mint in the French provinces, or on the principal bankers of foreign countries.

The shares were soon subscribed for. The favour of the Regent, and the advantage of a subscription accepted three-fourths in Government paper, attracted investors. Nevertheless, the bank was well laughed at to begin with. With some three or four hundred

thousand livres in cash, a foreigner from distant Thule was about to revolutionise commerce. He was mad, of course, said the Parisian of that day, who, like his descendants, Adolphe and Auguste, being hopelessly ignorant, laughed at whatever he did not understand. But the laughers soon changed their tune. Law had seen that the chief obstacle to the recommencement of business was the frequent alteration of the coinage. How, asks M. Crochut again, could people deal on credit when they had to fear being paid in a depreciated money, at twenty or thirty per cent. less than the price agreed on? Law followed the practice of Amsterdam, and stipulated on his notes that the receipts and payments should be made according to the weight and standard of the day of their issue—that is to say, that silver being at forty livres the marc (two hundred and forty-five grammes) on the day of the issue of a note, it should be payable at the rate of forty livres the marc, whatever might afterwards be the intrinsic value of the coin. In this way bargains concluded in bank money entailed no chances which might ruin buyer or seller. The person who deposited in the bank a sum representing one hundred marcs of pure silver on the day of deposit, was certain to withdraw, whenever he pleased, one hundred marcs of pure silver—a security he would

not have had with a notary. The advantage of having some fixed value as a medium for business at once struck the popular mind. Foreigners would only deal at bank value. Every man of business wished to have an account at the General Bank, and the demand for its paper against specie was so great that notes were no longer issued except at a premium. As specie poured into his coffers, Law undertook to discount good commercial securities at six, and afterwards at four, per cent. per annum, and contributed largely to the revival of commercial activity. Prosperity having settled on the Banque Générale, an extraordinary decree of the Council of State raised its credit to a still higher pitch. The agents entrusted with the management of the royal revenues were commanded to receive the bank notes, as money, in payment of all contributions, and to cash at sight and without discount such notes of the said bank as should be presented to them, to the extent of the funds they might have in hand. Thus the innumerable finance offices became so many branches of the Parisian Bank, whose success was so great that all the efforts of Law's enemies to discredit it proved failures. Counter schemes of land banks, on the very plan proposed long before in Scotland by Law himself, were brought forward by the brothers Pâris-Duvernay. D'Argenson, who detested Law, depre-

ciated the coinage at a stroke from forty to sixty livres the marc ; the parliament of Paris resisted the financial measures of the Regent, and renewed the ordinances which forbade foreigners, under the severest penalties, from interfering in the management of the royal revenue. It was all in vain. The parliament of Paris was rapped on the knuckles, and told to mind its own business ; and towards the end of 1718 the alliance between Law, the Regent, the Duc de Bourbon, and the Duc d'Antin became closer than ever, and prudent men already dreaded that a solid and substantial success might be expanded into a disaster, when, on the 4th of December, 1718, appeared a proclamation of the king, converting the General Bank into a Royal Bank, thus taking away from its engagements the limited, but real, guarantee of an actual capital, to substitute in its place the "indefinite but doubtful guarantee of an indebted State." To effect the change, the State bought out the original capitalists. On each share of five thousand livres only the first fourth had been paid up—to wit, three hundred and seventy-five livres in specie, and eleven hundred and twenty-five in bad paper. The reimbursement was made at par and in silver, so that the shareholder, who had never advanced the value of more than eight hundred livres in silver, actually received five thousand

—about as good an investment as ever was made. So far, the plans of Law had been completely successful, but he was now about to complicate the Royal Bank with a plan for founding a company trading to the Western Indies, a famous but disastrous enterprise, which has passed into history as the Mississippi Scheme.

At the period of Law's financial success, several French trading companies were clinging to a precarious existence. The old East India Company, reconstituted by Colbert, had not paid dividends for many years. There was a Guinea Company trading on the West Coast of Africa—in negroes of course. There was a private privilege, granted in 1713, for the China trade—yet unworked. Finally, there was the brand-new Western Company, intended to cultivate the French possessions in North America, combining Crozat's grant with the monopoly of selling beaver—a modest venture, with a capital of two millions of livres. As it is not unusual to speak of the whole of these schemes under the general title of Mississippi, it may be well to explain the share of the scheme occupied by the Father of Waters. Towards the end of the seventeenth century France became possessed of the country of Louisiana, a term not restricted to the present State of that name, but including the whole basin of the

Mississippi and its tributaries. From the French settlements in Canada on the north, it extended to the Gulf of Mexico on the south; to the eastward and westward its boundaries might be said to have been, in the language of the immortal O'Mulligan, "over there." The control of this Louisiana, which might have been construed to signify the whole territory now occupied by the United States—Texas and Alaska excepted—had been granted, in 1712, by Louis the Fourteenth to one Antoine Crozat, merchant, who had been so fortunate in his maritime speculations (nature unknown) as to have gained a capital of forty millions of livres. For a certain sum of hard cash (not specified) the said Crozat obtained a grant of this eligible property, which the French funnily speak of as "these deserts," with the exclusive right of trading to it for sixteen years. After five years' struggle, Crozat thought that, as the speculation was fatally unprofitable, he had better hand it over to a company, and suggested the scheme to Law, who surprised everybody by declaring that it would be necessary to create, not a "wretched little shopping affair existing on a capital of two millions, but a sovereign company, fit to rival the great companies of Holland and England, and depending on a capital of one hundred millions," divided into shares of five hun-

dred livres, payable in State-notes, then at a discount of seventy per cent. Law saw no inconvenience in this deficit, and provided, he said, that the four per cent. interest on the State-notes were faithfully paid by the Exchequer, he undertook not only to absorb a hundred millions of these in his enterprise, but to raise the remainder of that paper to par. The formation of the company was resolved upon, and letters patent were issued towards the end of August, 1717. The only burden imposed upon the company was that of rendering fidelity and homage to the king of France, in token of vassalage ; in fact, the major part of North America was converted by a stroke of the pen into a fief of the French crown, by people whose idea of its position and extent was of the haziest possible kind. Important privileges were conferred with the ease and liberality invariably displayed when the property of others is concerned. For twenty-four years from January, 1718, the company was invested with the monopoly of all possible trade, comprising the sale of Canadian furs, the perpetual and irrevocable grant of all lands, watercourses, mines, forests, and islands (yet undiscovered !) dependent on Louisiana, the right of selling, alienating, and cultivating these properties without paying any rent to the mother-country, and the right of arming and equipping a navy in war time. It was further provided that the colonists



should be exempted from all taxes "injurious to the expansion of the new settlement"—a magnificently loose definition—and that the State-notes supplied to form the capital should be converted into perpetual annuities. A curious illustration of the spirit of the time is provided by the clauses enacting that "foreigners" were not forbidden to take shares in the enterprise, and that "any one could become a shareholder without detracting from his rank or titles."

Law's promise to raise to par and to sustain the value of state-notes had been publicly made; and some months after the conversion of the General into a Royal Bank, he began to feel that it was time to make a stroke. Nothing had been done with the Western Company. The shares had been taken up merely because they could be paid for in paper which was almost useless. Suddenly Law gave an impulse to his company by purchasing at par, or even at a premium, at six months' date, shares which were then at a discount of fifty per cent. There was a rush to buy, and the shares rose to par at once. Law saw his opportunity, and in the month of May, 1719, obtained a decree amalgamating the existing Eastern and Western Companies, etc., into a new "Indian Company." To the privileges and monopolies already granted to the Western Company were added the sole privilege of

trading from Guinea to the Japanese Archipelago, of colonising especially the Cape of Good Hope, the East Coast of Africa, all the known islands of the Pacific, Persia, the Mogul Empire, the kingdom of Siam, China, Japan, and South America. The concession included the exclusive right of importing from these countries all products, natural or manufactured, not prohibited in France. Those who know the history of the English and Dutch East India Companies may be amused to find that the Mississippi was the backbone of a scheme which included many privileges of real value, but the East Indies were just then in bad odour. Colbert's Company had benefited nobody but the directors. Shareholders were sore and savage, and completely "disillusioned" concerning the East, but the Mississippi country had the advantage of being entirely unknown. It was not difficult to people its virgin solitudes with untold treasures. Several modes of puffing were resorted to. Engravings were circulated showing the arrival of the French at the Mississippi, surrounded by male and female savages displaying every sign of respect and admiration. "There are seen," said the accompanying description, "mountains full of gold and silver, copper, lead, and quicksilver. As these metals are very common, and the savages know nothing of their value, they exchange lumps of gold and silver for

European manufactures, such as knives, cooking utensils, spindles, a small looking-glass, or even a little brandy." Factories employing hundreds and thousands of Indian women were turning out immense quantities of silk. Ingots of Mississippi silver were going to be assayed at the mint. A rock of emerald had been found in Arkansas. Unfortunately for some of these tales of the wealth of Mississippi, there was in Paris a man who had been there. Lamothe Cadillac, an old soldier, formerly employed in Louisiana, did not hesitate to tell the truth about that remarkable country, and was laid by the heels in the Bastille for his pains. Judging from the description of the French, the "awful solitudes" of Louisiana consisted of a scarcely habitable "desert," desolated by fevers and infested with savages. It seems to be a fact that when Crozat made over the viceroyalty to the Western Company, there were but four or five hundred whites and twenty blacks in all Louisiana, but after 1718 Law sent out the engineer Dclatour, at the head of a band of workmen, and laid the foundation of New Orleans in honour of the Regent. In France the company bought Belle Isle as a depot, and built the fort of Lorient.

As the shares of the Western Company had produced no specie, Law proceeded under authority to issue new shares of the Indian Company—fifty

thousand of five hundred francs each, payable in specie, and by twentieths, monthly, with a discount of ten per cent. on paying in full at the time of allotment—a combination which placed in the directors' power twenty-seven and a half millions of francs in silver. While the parliament of Paris was hesitating over the registration of the edict, the original shares purchased with State-notes rose to one hundred and thirty. Law's promise was already performed, but as if to pile wonder upon wonder, he obtained a new decree, in which it was said that, in consequence of the high value of the shares recently issued—the “Indian Company” shares—it was just to establish a general rule, which should be susceptible of no favour; that, consequently, no one should be allowed to take up these new shares without possessing a sum of old shares—of the “Western Company”—four times larger than that for which he now wished to subscribe. Thus, to obtain ten shares of the new or Indian series, it was necessary to possess forty “Westerns.” The public called the latter Mothers, and the “Indians,” Daughters. Each of these “daughters,” adds M. Crochut, “brought her dowry with her; when you had obtained her by means of five hundred and fifty livres, you could immediately derive from her, from hand to hand, a profit which doubled and tripled the investment.” The rush was enormous, the

mothers were eagerly bought up in order to secure the daughters, and when no more daughters were to be found, the mothers were sought for at any price. The excitement was kept up by skilfully adding from time to time fresh fields to the company's already ample domain. In 1719 the company bought a monopoly of tobacco. It shortly became known that they farmed the salt mines of Alsace and Franche-Comté. Enthusiasm rose higher and higher. They offered to pay the pensions and other debts of the State, for a discount of three per cent. They next undertook the collection of taxes gathered directly by the Exchequer, and the next move was to purchase the right of coining money from the king, for nine years, for fifty millions of livres. The shares doubled in value, and the opportunity was seized to "water the stock," which appeared to get richer the more it was diluted. To pay the capital of fifty millions promised to the State, it was necessary to create new shares, and a decree of the Council authorised the company to issue fifty thousand of them. The nation went mad after the "grand-daughters," as the new shares were called, and this furore again raised the value of the mothers and grandmothers. The rise on the shares of the Indian Company reached two hundred per cent., while the State-notes and all the depreciated paper of the former reign rose to par.

To the historian of to-day, looking back at the great Mississippi Scheme through a long vista of financial bubbles of every size and hue, it would seem that in Law's mind there existed no scheme—properly called so—at all. As the gigantic undertaking, or rather series of undertakings, unfolds itself, the want of an originally cosmic idea becomes apparent. Law, like many men who have made a figure in the world, really worked from hand to mouth, barely keeping pace with the natural growth of his work. One by one the financial departments of the State were absorbed into his immense enterprise. In the beginning of September the Indian Company offered to take on lease the farms of the revenues granted the previous year to Aimon Lambert, and to lend to the king, at three per cent., a sum of twelve hundred millions to pay off the different creditors of the State. This plan combined popularity with revenge. Law became the idol of the people, and enjoyed the pleasure of paying off the debt of the country and his private score against the Brothers Pâris, who, trading as Aimon Lambert, were nicknamed the Four Sons of Aymon. To realise the twelve hundred millions which it offered to pay the king, the company issued more shares, and eventually raising its offers to fifteen hundred millions, in order to extinguish, together with the annuities, whatever remained of State-notes, issued

still more shares, until what with the mothers, daughters, grand-daughters, and the "State Loan," the Indian Company had issued six hundred and twenty-four thousand shares, of five hundred livres each, representing three hundred and twelve millions; but, profiting by the rise in the value of the stock, it had sold them for nearly eighteen hundred millions. To pay the dividend on this enormous sum, Law calculated on an income from all sources of eighty-two millions, sufficient to pay a splendid dividend on the nominal capital, but hardly a remunerative return to the purchasers who had bought their shares, not for five hundred, but for five thousand livres.

At the issue of the new shares, Paris, and, for that matter, France, went mad, and every artifice was employed to keep the excitement up to fever pitch. Shares were sold by auction, and were delivered at the company's hotel. The Rue Vivienne and the adjacent streets were filled with a tumultuous and furious crowd. All sorts and conditions of men crowded to the front, armed with bags of coin or well-lined pocket-books, and each man scowled on his neighbour as an obstacle between him and fortune. Neither sleep, hunger, nor thirst could arrest them, till the fatal news arrived that the last share had been delivered, when the seething crowd vanished at once. Those who had been

happy enough to secure shares made their way quickly enough to the Rue Quincampoix—the theatre of scenes like those in Change Alley during the South Sea Bubble, and in Capel Court while the railway mania prevailed. This Rue Quincampoix had been formed originally by the pleasure-houses of the bankers. By degrees it became the centre of the trade in State and commercial paper—ticklish securities enough in the latter days of Louis the Fourteenth, but attractive to those speculators who preferred a big risk for a big profit to the more modest but certain reward of regular industry. A brisk trade in money-lending was carried on. As there are to-day many financiers without finances, so were there bankers in 1719 who, being totally destitute of capital, carried on business by means of “loans by the clock ;” that is to say, that at the moment of concluding the bargain, they rushed off to some money-lender, who entrusted them with the necessary cash at the rate of a quarter per cent. per quarter of an hour, a rate which would astound even the pleasant West-end financial agent who knows nothing of figures, nor percentages either, but thinks a shilling a month for the loan of a sovereign a comfortable rate, easy to compute without interest tables. In 1719 the “street,” as it was called, was a narrow passage, about a hundred and fifty feet long by five or six wide,



terminating at one end in the Rue Aubry-le-Boucher, and at the other in the Rue aux Ours. As the increasing concourse of people intercepted traffic, the street was transformed into a kind of exchange by enclosing it at its two extremities with gates, open for the public from morning till night. It was found necessary to forbid nocturnal meetings, as the noise banished sleep from the neighbourhood. In the daytime the crush was tremendous, the busy crowd overflowing into the neighbouring streets, filling the cook-shops and the coffee-shops, and buying any food at any price in order to secure a place. Persons of quality—terribly in want of money—jostled by footmen, and bishops, and dainty abbés; men of the sword, men of the robe, men of the pen, and men of the shop made up a motley crowd, shouting, quarrelling, buying and selling, cursing, swearing, and scrambling over the mushroom wealth of the new Company of the Indies. Thither came that exemplary nobleman, the Marquis of Carabas, delighting in his blue blood and proud of his seigneurial rights, his right of exemption from taxation, his right to keep a thousand or so of pigeons in a gigantic pigeon-house, and his right to let the said birds eat up his vassals' crops, together with other rights which it is needless to specify. The worthy marquis had been hard hit of late, and, having got the concession of a lot of shares from the successful

Scotchman, would of course be anxious to realise them. Younger men, the roués of the period, also played heavily on the "street." The Chevalier de Bric-à-Brac and the Viscount Sanspareil were there, of course, early in the morning, not very sober, having been up drinking all night, but having plenty to say to the female speculators who crowded the offices of the "street" itself and the Rue aux Ours. Footmen were said to be particularly lucky among the male speculators, as were cooks and chamber-maids among women.

In November the price of shares rose, after some fluctuations, to ten thousand livres, and the destinies of France appeared shut in the narrow limit of the "street." Other business was neglected, and even grave physicians were afflicted with the Mississippi mania which had outgrown Mississippi altogether. M. Churac, principal physician to the Regent, on his way to visit a female patient, having been informed that the price of shares was falling, was so affected by the news that he could think of nothing else; and, accordingly, while feeling the lady's pulse, kept muttering, "Oh, mon Dieu! it falls—it falls!" The invalid, frightened almost out of her wits, began to ring the bell with all her might, and was just on the point of fainting with terror, when the doctor explained that there was nothing the matter with her pulse, and that he was thinking

only of the market. M. de la Mothe and the Abbé Terrasson, two of the best scholars in France, met one evening, and, discoursing very solemnly on the madness of speculation, congratulated themselves very heartily that, whatever might happen to others, men of erudition were, at least, free from the prevailing epidemic. A week later they met in the Rue Quincampoix !

Enriched by the sudden rise in the value of shares, many insignificant persons emerged for a while from their native obscurity, and many odd stories were told of their behaviour. A fortunate footman made so much money that he provided himself with a fine carriage ; but, the first day it came to the door, he, instead of getting inside, jumped up behind from the force of habit. Law's own coachman made so great a fortune that he retired from service ; and the sometime cook-maid to a person of quality appeared in public with so magnificent an equipage, that her envious friends said she " had tumbled from a garret into a carriage." Another lucky speculator, finding himself all at once rich beyond his wildest dreams, hastened to a coachmaker and ordered a carriage to be made in " the best style," lined with the richest crimson velvet and adorned with gold fringe. As he was departing, the coachmaker ran after him, to inquire what arms were to be put on the carriage, and was told, " Oh, the finest—the finest,

by all means." Everybody made money, from the fortunate Madame Chaumont, down to the Ducs de Bourbon and D'Antin. Boundless extravagance was the fashion of the hour. One Mississippian, who had formerly been a "landscape painter," owned more than three millions' worth of precious stones, without reckoning the beautiful diamond of the Count de Nocé, which he bought for half a million, and a girdle-buckle, which he bought of a Jew for a like sum. The enriched artist, not content with a silver and silver-gilt service weighing four thousand marcs, carried off from the jeweller's that which had been made for the King of Portugal, whose agents had not been ready with their cash. His cooking utensils were of silver, and the furniture of his house of the most magnificent kind. He had eighty horses in his stable, and ninety servants; and, curiously enough, anticipated the "lady and gentlemen help" idea. We are gravely told, that among his crowd of domestics were "four young ladies, as chambermaids, and four footmen of birth very superior to that of their master."

While the fortunate gamblers were thus disporting themselves, Law, to do him justice, was occupied—when he could escape from his innumerable suitors—in the grave and invidious task of abolishing the thousands of useless officials, who had been called into the existence by necessities of the preceding

reign. Many vexatious taxes were abolished. Public works rose apace : the bridge of Blois was built, the canal of Burgundy constructed, and it would seem that the idea of transforming Paris into a seaport was entertained by Law. Buvat says, "They are working at a canal at Elbœuf, by means of which they expect to make the tide of the sea flow up the Scine to within a short distance of Paris, so as to render the river more navigable." On every side reigned prosperity and progress. A glow of health had been infused into a country for years before on the verge of wretchedness. Law was worshipped as the saviour of France.

This golden age lasted about eight months, from June, 1719, to February, 1720.

The first blow came from abroad. Among the foreign speculators in Mississippi stock were many quite astute enough to see that, at the market prices of December, the probable returns, admitting the success of every operation, would scarcely have given one per cent.—a proof that the shares were at a ridiculously false price. In December the realisers, as they were called, commenced their operations. Making a "pool" among themselves, they forced up the prices for a fortnight, keeping shares at between eighteen and twenty thousand livres each. They then began to "unload," and got rid of the whole of their stock at an enormous profit. The plan was

so well managed that no panic occurred; but its effect was intensified by the most opulent French Mississippians, who took the alarm and hastened to sell. All these stock-jobbers, throwing their shares at once into the market of the Rue Quincampoix, rushed with the proceeds in notes to the Bank, to exchange them for silver. To parry this run, Law issued, in the course of a few months, no fewer than thirty-three edicts, decrees, and declarations, to fix the price of gold and silver, and arbitrarily control the circulation. These efforts only increased the general distrust. The depreciation of specie no longer stopped the realisers, whose margin of profit was so enormous that they could afford a discount of twenty-five per cent. without flinching. Meanwhile the efforts made to bolster up the falling shares only assisted the great holders in "unloading" gradually, without actually producing a "break" in the market. The realisers hardly knew what to do with their money. Foreigners made off, carrying away with them untold millions in specie. Frenchmen bought houses, castles, landed estates—anything, in short, at any price, rather than remain saddled with notes, gold, and silver, the value of which fluctuated every hour. Forestallers rushed into the markets, and bought up groceries, tallow, and even books. One stock-jobber, named Lagrange, bought an entire edition of Bayle's Dictionary. In the early part of

1720 the gloom was increased by the reckless acts of the company in procuring emigrants for Mississippi. Backed by the authority of the Regent, they began by sweeping the prisons of their male and female inhabitants, marrying them by lot, and shipping them off. As fast as these were shipwrecked, died of fever, or were killed off by the Indians, fresh supplies were sent off. Girls of suspected character were torn from their homes, and packed off with the vilest malefactors—as Manon Lescaut was torn from the unhappy Desgrieux. To arrest the suspected persons who were to people the colony, a regiment of archers was raised by the company, of whom each received, besides his kit, twenty sous a day pay, and a pistole for every person arrested. These ruffians, nicknamed the “Bandoliers of the Mississippi,” would have arrested a saint for half the money. Bravely attired in blue and silver, and armed with sword, gun, bayonet, and pistols, they scoured Paris in search of victims. To them all were guilty. It was sufficient to slip a purse into an archer’s hand, and whisper a word in his ear, to get rid of an enemy for good and all. At last, the disappearance of so many people, especially young girls, occasioned a popular outbreak, ending in a score of the archers being killed on the spot, and a much larger number dangerously wounded. Evil news arrived from the colony. It became known that most of the women

sent forcibly there soon died of disease or despair. The men formed connections with the native women ; one of whom, the Queen of Missouri, of the Race of the Sun, came over to Paris. There was one disadvantage about this lady ; it was that she possessed in her own land the right of putting her husband to death. Nevertheless, a brave and handsome sergent of the guards, named Dubois, married her, after she had been baptised at Notre Dame with great ceremony. The happy pair went back to Mississippi ; but King Dubois, happening to disagree with his bride, was at once done to death, and, it was said, eaten. In the meantime the value of shares declined, and, despite the restrictions on the use of specie, the Prince de Conti drew three cartloads of crown-pieces out of the Bank, and the Duc de Bourbon an immense sum. The difficulty of a falling market began to be experienced. Unfortunate speculators took to the highway, or, like Count Horn and his companions, carried robbery and murder into the "street" itself. These noble gentlemen decoyed an unhappy broker, named Lacroix, into the "Wooden Sword" tavern, asked for a private room, breakfasted, poniarded their victim, and carried off a great booty. One of the assassins escaped, but the Count Horn—a descendant of the famous Count Horn, executed with Count Egmont by the Duke of Alva—was taken, and, in spite of every effort made by his illustrious



connections, was broken alive on the wheel on Tuesday, 26th March, 1720. Many other robberies and murders took place, while the whole country was disorganised by the renewal of domiciliary visits in search of specie held in contravention of a recent edict, which prohibited any person keeping, without special permission, more than five hundred livres in cash. \*

Towards June a downright panic set in. The Duc de Broglie told Law that he would end with a halter, and a wager was laid in London that the hanging would take place not later than September. The scenes before the doors of the Bank were alarming, and a strong force of soldiers was required to protect it. People were crushed to death endeavouring to reach the entrance. Desperate riots took place. In one of these, Law's carriage was stopped by a woman, whose husband had been killed in the morning. She was crying for "Vengeance!" Law sprang out, and, with the cool contempt of an old duellist, said to those who were attacking him, "You are all canaille," and majestically walked through them into the Palais-Royal. His coachman, however, who ventured to assume the grand airs of his master when driving off, was killed by the mob and the carriage smashed to atoms. By December Law's position was no longer tenable, as it became only too clear that his head

would be the price of reconciliation between the Regent and the exasperated people. On the 12th he showed himself at the Opera, no longer pursued by a crowd of admirers, but an object of curiosity to those who looked upon him as a doomed man. Cool and contemptuous as ever, he disdained to notice the sensation he produced. A week later he was in Brussels.

Of the large fortune he brought into France, and fourteen estates he had purchased there, he had but thirty-six thousand livres left, and a couple of diamond rings worth ten thousand crowns a piece, one of which he presented to Madame de Prie out of gratitude for her having procured him a passport in the king's name. During his subsequent residence in England he appears to have received subsidies from the Regent from time to time ; but being unable to recover any important part of his once large capital, he finally left England and settled in Venice, where he lived by play, then and there esteemed as honourable as any other pursuit. He left, at his death in 1729, only a few pictures and his diamond ring, which he was accustomed to pledge when there was a run of luck against his faro bank.

# WILLIAM CAXTON, PRINTER AND MERCER.

---

## CHAPTER I.

### IN LONDON.

FEW facts are more curious than that the invention of printing, and its introduction into this country, should have occurred at a period of literary sterility, yet nothing is more certain than that, in the whole of the fifteenth century, but one really important book was written—the “Commentary” of Philip de Comines. It is true that in the more enlightened countries of Europe, the lack of productive power was compensated by work of a hardly less important kind. If no mental movement of any kind was going on in England, where the ferment of mediæval scholasticism had died out, and left nothing but bad Latin behind it, yet abroad there were signs that men had turned from the grammar and philosophy of the schoolmen, and were seeking to learn accuracy of thought and eloquence of diction from the ancient models, which had been thrown aside by the ignorant fanatics of the early Church, who, regarding the

precious works of Greece and Rome as merely heathen learning, not only discouraged the study of poets and rhetoricians, but actually erased their works from the parchment in order to cover it with pious legends written in monkish jargon. From Italy the taste for classical learning spread to Germany, France, and Burgundy. Convents were ransacked for ancient manuscripts, which were gradually accumulated in secular libraries. It was thus an age rather of accumulation than of production; of ingathering than of out-pouring; of seeking for good old models, instead of constructing clumsy new ones; of imitation, rather than originality. In this work England was far behind the nations already alluded to. Between the England of Chaucer and the England of Shakspeare yawns a great dark gulf, the lowest and most Cimmerian depths whereof are occupied by the exact period in which William Caxton, mercer, translator, author, and printer, dwelt in Bruges, and acquired the art which has placed his name for ever among the roll of England's worthies. The scanty records and obscure chronicles of a stormy time reveal but few of the causes which produced this blank in the history of the English intellect. What little is written of England in the middle of the fifteenth century refers to dreary details of the battles and sieges of a senseless struggle for mere power, unaccompanied by principle or con-

viction of any kind. It is true that for cruelty, treachery, and wholesale slaughter of mankind, the age of the Renaissance matches any that preceded it, but in the great sixteenth century, men at least fought for something intelligible, whereas, in the England of the period preceding it, the insignificant differences of various branches of the reigning family cost the country a vast amount of blood and treasure. A struggle in which no human being, save the several branches of the House of Plantagenet, and their immediate followers, could feel the faintest interest, brought English civilisation to a deadlock ; the only compensation for which can be found in the extermination of the great feudatories—those sturdiest of all obstacles to the material advancement of the nation. During this dark period, there was in England neither literature nor art, save in the direction of architecture, which shone brightly among gloomy surroundings, as Alpine peaks decked with a thousand icy pinnacles glitter in the sun, while darkness and storm reign far below the serene altitude of their crests. Mere civil war, however, will hardly account for the mental night which spread over England from the appearance of the “*Canterbury Tales*” to that of the “*Utopia*,” for other nations were fighting in and with each other, and yet, amid the clash of arms, were quickening into intellectual life. During

the long reign of Edward the Third, and the troubled life of his grandson, the influence of Italy was distinctly felt in the islands of the northern sea. Gower lent his potent aid to the formation of a school of poetry, carried to its highest perfection by Chaucer; the complaint of *Piers Plowman* expressed in intelligible form the widely-spread discontent of the people; the preaching of Wiclif and his followers displayed a craving for a new form of religion; the travels of Maundevile exhibited a strange mixture of old-world superstition with a forecast of new truths in physical science. This living, moving England is vividly depicted in the bright glow of the genius of Chaucer. In his pages we see before us an epitome of his England, brilliant at the top, and jovial in the middle, while *Piers Plowman* paints more roughly, but yet strongly, with that best kind of pathos which is mingled with humour, the privations of the labouring folk, devoured by the exactions of the military and clerical caste. The spirit of the troubadours was not yet dead, but reinforced by the example of the great chiefs of Italian literature. Lessons had been learnt from Dante in the treatment of the sublime, Petrarch lent a particle of his exquisite tenderness to all who could read his poems in the "vulgar tongue," and Boccaccio had taught mankind the art of telling a story. Englishmen had been quick in appreciating

the advantage of the study of Italian and Latin literature, and for a brief period advanced towards the van of modern culture. But this step forward was succeeded by a relapse into that deepest of all darkness which precedes the true dawn. Under the House of Lancaster no single work of a literary kind worthy of the most slender notice was produced—the fugitive poems of Lydgate, the monk of Bury, alone excepted, and the merit of these is very slight. In the meantime, the pursuit of letters was eagerly maintained abroad. Enlightened despots and half-pagan popes kindled that fire of literary and artistic glory which has never thoroughly died out in Italy. On the ruins of ancient Byzantine art, Italian genius built new schools of painting and sculpture. Wealthy scholars passed busy lives in the collection of manuscripts, and employed skilful scribes and patient limners in multiplying transcripts of their treasures. Germany and Flanders developed an art of their own, and France, next in backwardness to England, boasted at least one historian in Philip de Comines, and one poet in François Villon. In England, at the very fountain-heads, learning had dwindled to clumsy pedantry. The University of Oxford was proverbial for bad Latin, the jargon of Scotus and Ockham. Poggio, that diligent and successful discoverer of ancient manuscripts, writing from England in 1420, complains that he could find

no good books, and evidently holds English scholarship of light account: "Men given up to sensuality we may find in abundance, but very few lovers of learning; and those barbarous, skilled more in quibbles and sophisms than in literature. I visited many convents; they were all full of books of modern doctors, whom we should not think worthy so much as to be heard. They have few works of the ancients, and those are much better with us. Nearly all the convents of this island have been founded within four hundred years; but that was not a period in which either learned men or such books as we seek could be expected, for they had been lost before." It is easy to imagine the horror of the elegant Italian at finding himself in a barbaric atmosphere; but the worst was not reached. England was not yet so completely out of the world, as she became in the period intervening between the loss of France and the intimate alliance of the Houses of York and Burgundy. There were a few chroniclers of a sort, contradicting each other, and in the main poorly informed. Modern readers can form little idea of the ghastly dreariness of a mediæval chronicle. When the writers are dealing with their own time, they are clumsy, prejudiced, and ignorant of all literary form and style, but there is a positive value in contemporary evidence which compensates the student for much horrible



suffering. Unhappily, however, the majority of these chronicles are mere compilations from other documents, and generally begin with the creation of the world—an important but remote event. Wading through a mass of so-called history—sacred, profane, and legendary, all absurdly jumbled together—the reader alights at last upon England, and its discovery by King Brute of Troy, with the genealogies of the same. If he do not die in the meantime, he will at last arrive at the period of which the historian knows something, and must then be exceedingly careful how he accepts any statement without verification by contemporary records of some kind or other.

It is a strange picture—full of deep shadows—this England of the fifteenth century, as portrayed by the clumsy hands of chroniclers, and those more faithful limners the writers of the “Paston Letters.” Amid the frequent apparition of armies may be dimly descried the independence of parliaments, and the importance of units of labour, banded together and protected by charters often bought at a high price from necessitous sovereigns. The labourer was perhaps in material comfort not very much worse off than he has been since, but then there was no peace or repose from incessant tumult. Owners of beeves and sheep and fields of golden grain were only too glad to get their corn cut, and

their beasts slaughtered, salted, and safely bestowed behind four walls, whence marauders might not win them without a costly struggle. The annals of the Paston family tell us that a state of private war between a great lord and one or more of his liegemen or neighbours was regarded as no unusual phenomenon. If the small suffered from frequent oppression, the great were no better off, for those who escaped the field of battle were only reserved for the headsman. Such intelligence as existed was devoted to the career of arms—the Church having sunk into ignorance and sloth, in which the spectre of Lollardry by turns stalked abroad and slunk into byways, awaiting the day when the voice of Luther should repeat in thunder the timid murmurs of Wiclif and his followers, whose utterances could by no means be done away with and abolished. An age of ignorance was naturally superstitious. Adam of Usk tells us of the burning of the first heretic in Smithfield, and we also see that worthy ecclesiastic, lawyer, and politician—one of the foremost men of his time—marvelling at the spontaneous ringing of the four bells at the corners of St. Edward's shrine at Westminster ; at the strange flow of blood from the spring into which the head of Llewellyn-ap-Gryffud had been thrown ; at the comet which foretold the death of Gian Galeazzo Visconti, Duke of Milan ; and the apparition in the air of the arms of

that potentate, to wit "a serpent azure, swallowing a naked man, gules, on a field argent." But as darkness, like light, is rarely absolutely complete, it is possible to descry through the mirk the brilliant soldier of Agincourt, Sir John Fastolf—from whom Shakespeare was once absurdly supposed to have drawn his immortal Falstaff—Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, John Tiptoft, the "butcher" Earl of Worcester, and Antony Woodville, busily engaged in collecting manuscripts : a work to which the Duke of Bedford contributed in lawless but wholesale fashion by seizing the royal library at Paris, and carrying it off to this country during his regency.

In the year 1438, a youth from the Weald of Kent came to London—a London like nothing now extant, with its narrow streets crowded with merchandise, and swarming with people clad in coarse materials dyed with the bright colours which light up a crowd ; a London destitute of coach or carriage, but enlivened by processions of great ecclesiastics on muleback, and of local dignitaries in the mazarine blue furred gowns, the shape of which is still preserved in the robe of a common councilman. More wonderful is the attire of ladies of high degree, the lofty steeple-crowned head-dress just now developing a tendency to fork out in two wings or horns, the object of many pleasantries among the idle and ribald 'prentices. Westminster is already

crowded with lawyers, who have long since entered in and dwelt there, and the great hall is encumbered with Flemish chapmen crying :

‘ Master, what will you copen or buy ?  
Fyne felt hattes, or spectacles to reede ?  
Lay down your sylver, and here you may speede.’

At Westminster Gate—the sun being at “hygho pryme,” an army of cooks waylay the stranger, proffering bread and ale and wine, with “rybbs of befe,” both fat and “ful fyne.” The way from Westminster to London is beset by itinerate vendors crying, “Hot peascods,” strawberry ripe, and cherries in rice. Beyond Temple Bar, the shopkeepers, busily touting for custom, implore passers-by to take “peper and safforne, velvet sylke and lawne,” and Paris thread, the finest in the land. By London Stone congregate the drapers, striving to sell their cloth ; and above all rises the stupendous uproar of the sellers of comestibles, “hot shepes’ fete,” mackerel, beef, and pies—the clatter of “pewter pottes in a heape,” and the sound of “harpe, pype, and mynstrelsyce”—all signs that the loss of France, and the quarrels of the great lords of the council, have affected ordinary English folk but slightly in their appetite for food or other entertainment.

From the last book of the Polycronicon we obtain strange glimpses of the deeds done in London during Caxton’s apprenticeship to Robert Large, mercer. It was lucky, by-the-way, for Caxton, that

those of his day who could read at all read carelessly, or what would have been done with him after Bosworth Field for writing an awful passage, under date 1437-40, in which he describes how one Owen (Tudor) a squire of Wales, a man of low birth—who had many a day before secretly wedded Queen Katherine, and had by her three sons and a daughter,—was taken and committed to Newgate to prison by my Lord of Gloucester, protector of the realm, and how he broke prison by means of a priest that was his chaplain, and after he was taken again to Newgate and afterwards was delivered at large, and one of his sons was afterward made Earl of Richmond, etc., etc. Mighty pleasant reading for his dreaded lord King Henry, the seventh of that name ! Also, he tells us, there was a great dearth of corn in all England, for a bushel of wheat was worth forty pence in many places, yet men might not have enough. Wherefore, Stephen Brown, the Lord Mayor, sent into Prussia and brought to London certain ships laden with rye, which eased and did much good to the people, for corn was so scarce in some places that poor people made bread of fern roots. 'Prentice Caxton, then in the second year of his novitiate, was undoubtedly present at the ghastly ceremony of burning Sir Richard Wyche for Lollardry. The victim was degraded from his priesthood at St. Paul's, and burnt on Tower Hill, on St. Botolph's

Day, and, according to Caxton, died "a good crysten man," and many people, that is to say, of the common sort, came to the place where he had been burnt, and offered, and made a heap of stones, and set up a cross of wood, and held him for a saint till the mayor and sheriffs, by commandment of the king and bishops, destroyed it, and "made there a dung-hill." Another curious sight for the Kentish youth was the penance of Dame Eleanor Cobham, Duchess of Gloucester. It was not far from his master's house to Cheapside, through which the unhappy lady walked with a taper in her hand. There was doubtless a crowd of 'prentices at Smithfield at the burning of Dame Eleanor's accomplice, "Margery Jurdemayn," the witch of Eye, and at the hanging, drawing, and quartering of Roger Bolingbroke, at Tyburn—"on whose soul," exclaims Caxton, "God have mercy." He tells us, too, of a great affray in Fleet Street by night between men of the Court and men of London, wherein divers were slain and many hurt; of the great tempest of thunder and lightning, and the fire in St. Paul's steeple; of the marriage of King Henry and Margaret of Anjou, and of the reception at Blackheath by the mayor and aldermen, and all the crafts in blue gowns embroidered with their devices, and with red hoods. All this is marvellously exciting matter for the youth fresh from the Weald of Kent.

Happily, there is no doubt as to the date of Caxton's apprenticeship in 1438, a fact which effectually disposes of his supposed birth in 1412. Thanks to Mr. William Blades—whose "Life and Typography of William Caxton" is a wonderful instance of the happy combination of technical skill with patient research—we know where to look for proof of his hero's apprenticeship.

In the archives of the Worshipful Company of Mercers of the city of London is a folio volume, written on parchment by various scribes of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, extending from 1344 to 1464. The contents of the volume include: a rent-roll; the oath of house-holders; of linen-cloth meters; of livery-men; of brethren; of brokers; of apprentices, on their entry and issue; and divers other matters of interest. Two entries in this valuable volume record three important events in the life of Caxton. In the year 1438–39 appears the following:

It. John Large	} les appntices de	iiijs.
It. Willm Caxton		

This date fixes Caxton's age within two or three years. The legal majority of man—the age of twenty-one—was disregarded by the citizens of London, who in the fifteenth century insisted on a civic majority not attained till three years later. At that time no man could become a freeman and

engage in trade on his own account till he had reached the full age of twenty-four, and in view of this the indenture of an apprentice was always so drawn, that on the commencement of his twenty-fifth year he might "issue" from his apprenticeship. This fixed rule necessarily caused considerable variation in the length of servitude, which ranged, according to the age of the youth when entered, from seven to fourteen years. Ten, eleven, and twelve years were not uncommon terms of apprenticeship in the fifteenth century. Reckoning however, Caxton's servitude at the minimum of seven years, he could not have been more than seventeen years old at the date of entry ; and therefore cannot have been born before the year 1421, or nine years later than the date commonly quoted in books of reference. The date when Caxton was admitted to the freedom of his company is not recorded, but it was doubtless shortly after he had issued from his apprenticeship. This, however, is of minor importance, as his admission to the livery of the Mercers' Company, in 1453, is duly set forth as follows :

Lan du grace m cccc liij Et del Rôy Henry sizme plus le conqueste xxxj.

Entre en la lyvere pm An—

It. Emond Redeknape	.	.	vjs viijd.
It <sup>m</sup> . Richaert Burgh	.	.	vjs viijd.
It <sup>a</sup> . William Caxton	.	.	vjs viijd.



Occurring in the before-mentioned book of accounts, the whole passage is erased with the pen ; possibly in consequence of the fines on taking up the livery being remitted. In the same year Caxton, with others, is charged with fines to the amount of 3s. 4d., for failing to attend the "riding" of the mayor, Geoffrey Felding ; probably in consequence of his absence at Bruges, where he was then settled.

Caxton's master, Robert Large, was one of the richest and most powerful merchants in the city of London. A mercer and the son of a mercer, he was elected warden of his company as early as 1427, and filled the office of sheriff in 1430. During the apprenticeship of Caxton, in 1439-40, his master—of whom he must have been proud—was called to the mayoralty.

The mercers rode before him, in their new livery, preceded by sixteen silver trumpets ; and there were doubtless merry times in Large's house, a huge building at the north end of the Old Jewry—once a Jew's synagogue, then a house of friars, then a nobleman's dwelling, next occupied by Large, and in later times a tavern. Large did not long survive his mayoralty ; possibly the festivities of the year told upon the fine old mercer. In April, 1441, he died, leaving out of his ample fortune many bequests, among which were considerable sums for the completion of a new aqueduct, then in progress ; for the repairs of Lon-

don Bridge ; for cleansing the watercourse at Walbrook ; for marriage portions for poor girls ; for relief of domestic servants ; and for various hospitals in London, notably "Bedleem," Bishopsgate Without ; St. Thomas, of Southwark ; and the leper-houses at Hackney. This civic worthy did not forget his apprentices and his "servants," i.e. those issued from their apprenticeship who continued to work for their old master. One of these received fifty pounds—a handsome legacy in 1441—while Caxton and another recently-entered apprentice received twenty marks a-piece.

Shortly after his master's death, Caxton left England and went to Bruges, still as an apprentice mercer. In forming this resolution, he was probably influenced by the conclusion of a three years' peace between England and Flanders. Possibly he had, during his three years' work in London, become well acquainted with the Flemings, and he certainly had ascertained the advantages enjoyed by the English merchant adventurers settled there. Perhaps he prevailed upon the executors of Large to transfer him to Flanders, there to serve out the remainder of his apprenticeship, of which he could by no means get quit, save by running away and fighting in the unprofitable wars of the period ; or perhaps he was sent, without being asked, to attend to his master's business abroad. There seems to have been little

limit to a master's or executor's power of assignment. They were compelled to provide for apprentices, but apparently without limitation as to place, and it was usual to send young men abroad to some great mart, to gain experience in trade ; a practice which prevails in Germany to this very day.

Caxton's change of locality was of great advantage to him, first as a merchant, then as a printer. It must be recollected that in his day London was only growing into a great trading city, Bruges, Florence, Venice, and Constantinople—not yet in the hands of the Turks—being far before it as commercial centres. Bruges had long been not only the seat of government of the Dukes of Burgundy, but the metropolis of trading for all surrounding countries. It was the Venice of the north. Thither from all parts of northern Europe went merchants with their wares ; England sending great consignments of wool, then her chief product. As the towns of Flanders depended in great measure on England for their raw material, it may be imagined that Englishmen and their goods were well received at Bruges. Moreover, Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy—who had almost from a child been brought up at the English Court—gave great privileges to the Company of Merchant Adventurers, under the name of “The English Nation,” by which title they were generally known. Almost all foreign

trade in Caxton's time was carried on by means of Trade Guilds, analogous in their constitution to the Easterlings or merchants of the Steel Yard, who in London carried on a prosperous trade for centuries. These associations were governed by laws and charters, and enjoyed privileges, monopolies, and immunities, granted on the one side by their own Government, on the other by that of the country in which they were domiciled in a common dwelling. This practice took its rise from the ignorant jealousy of the people, who imagined that the brutal foreigner was ruining the nation. Frequent tumults compelled foreign merchants to dwell in a semi-fortified structure, of which the old London Steel Yard and the *Domus Anglorum* at Bruges are good representative specimens. The latter was a massive building, well enough barred and bolted to secure it against any momentary outbreak of popular turbulence, and the company was duly enrolled and chartered, exercising an internal jurisdiction of its own. The Mercers, whose foreign trade exceeded that of all other companies, appear to have originated the Association of Merchant Adventurers in the thirteenth century, under the name of the Guild or fraternity of St. Thomas-a-Becket, and to have retained the principal management for three centuries, although the Grocers, Drapers, Fishmongers, and several of the trade companies shared in the privilege of membership.

In or about 1441-42 Caxton left London to become an inmate of the *Domus Anglorum*, at Bruges, in the humble capacity of an apprentice mercer, and abode in the Burgundian capital—saving rare visits, first to London, and then to Cologne—for some five-and-thirty strenuous years.

---

## CHAPTER II.

### AT BRUGES.

A NEW world opened before Caxton on his arrival at Bruges. A barbarous country, misruled by a mob of unruly nobles, was exchanged for the wealthiest and best-governed community in Europe, the Republic of Venice perhaps excepted. In some respects, indeed, Bruges resembled rather Florence than the city of the Adriatic, as Philip the Good had many more points in common with the Medici than with the Doges of Venice. Both were private traders on an immense scale, both liberally patronized the arts and such current literature as existed. Both encouraged the discovery and transcription of the works of the poets, historians, philosophers, and orators of antiquity. In both families the love of letters was hereditary. Under Philip the Good the library at Bruges contained the then extraordinary

number of two thousand works, the greater part of them being magnificent vellum folios, beautifully illuminated, bound in velvet, satin, or damask, studded with gems, and protected by gold clasps, jewelled and chased. At Bruges was employed in the duke's service a complete army of authors, translators, transcribers, illuminators, and book-binders, who took care that their patron should not want a bard to sing his praises. The volumes produced by the duke's staff of artificers were not all destined for his own library. Manuscripts, conspicuous for size, for the beauty of the vellum, the elegance of the writing, the number and artistic merit of the illuminations and ornaments, and the luxury displayed in the bindings, were deemed fitting presents for princes ; and the great wealth of the Burgundian nobles enabled them, as inventories of the period testify, to indulge largely in this elegant species of liberality. Hardly second to his sovereign as a lover of books and a patron of their makers was Louis de Bruges, Seigneur de Gruthuyse, the same who received Edward the Fourth during his temporary flight into Flanders before the crowning triumphs of Barnet and Tewkesbury, and who was rewarded with the Earldom of Winchester. Under the patronage of this nobleman was established at Bruges the Guild of St. John the Evangelist, composed of the various classes of craftsmen

employed in the manufacture of books. It was at this moment, while the pursuit of literature in Bruges was most ardent, while bookish people resorted from all parts of Europe to Philip the Good as to a second Mæcenas, that young Caxton was transferred from the Old Jewry to the brilliant capital of Burgundy, and dwelt in the full blaze of such light as then shone in Europe. There he met the dealers in manuscript books, who drove a rich trade between Italy, France, and Burgundy, and there he heard of the new things done by the quick-witted men of the south. As the ancient civilisation of Byzantium was quenched by the Osmanli, and the city of Constantine consigned to utter darkness, the south and west of Europe sprung into new and brilliant life. Pope Nicholas the Fifth, in the eight years between 1447 and 1455, founded the Vatican library, and furnished it with five thousand volumes. Translators were busily at work, mostly in rendering Greek authors into Latin—to wit, Diodorus Siculus, Xenophon, Herodotus, Thucydides, Polybius, Appian, and Strabo. Hallam does full justice to Pope Nicholas the Fifth: "How striking the contrast between this pope and his famous predecessor Gregory I., who, if he did not burn and destroy heathen authors, was at least anxious to discourage the reading of them! These eminent men, like Michael Angelo's figures of 'Night' and 'Morn-

ing,' seem to stand at the two gates of the Middle Ages, emblems and heralds of the mind's long sleep and its awakening." Among accumulators of books, even Pope Nicholas was outshone by Matthias Corvinus, King of Hungary, who took advantage of the dispersion of libraries after the capture of Constantinople to purchase Greek manuscripts, and employed four transcribers at Florence, besides thirty at Buda, to enrich his collection.

The effect of the extraordinary demand for books, old and new, good, bad, and indifferent, was to produce a supply. When scribes could no longer write fast enough for the wants of their princely employers, certain thinking men set about to meet the difficulty, and it is more than probable that, as in the case of the steam-engine, the locomotive, and the electric telegraph, several persons were for years working independently of each other, in parallel lines, as it were, approaching nearer and nearer to the solution of the great problem. The certain knowledge now possessed of the history of the three great inventions alluded to, induces the belief that in every great centre of book production in the fifteenth century cunning artificers were striving to abridge the labour of transcription. It is, therefore, hardly necessary to discuss the comparative claims of Coster and Guttenberg, Schaeffer and Faust, to the invention of printing. Block-



printing, the poor relation of wood-engraving, had long been practised. An intelligent workman continually employed in engraving the legends on the pages of the block-books, and feeling the great need of a more rapid production as the demand for books grew stronger, would necessarily be impressed with the advantage to be gained if the letters which required so much care and time to form could only be rearranged without re-cutting. The best authorities now concur in the opinion that, although the art of printing was first perfected at Mayence, the earliest use of movable types must be recognised in the rude specimens attributed to Laurence Coster of Haerlem, who died in 1440, and whose efforts were probably improved upon by his workmen. The evidence in favour of this view is reasonably clear. There is preserved in the archives at Lille an original manuscript containing a diary of Jean le Robert, Abbé de St. Aubert de Cambrai, among the entries in which the two following are especially worthy of notice, as showing that little books for the instruction of youth, of rough and common workmanship, were printed and sold in Flanders within a few years of Coster's death, and in the early part of Caxton's residence at Bruges.

“Item. For a printed Doctrinal (doctrinal gette en molle) that I have sent for to Bruges by Marquet, a writer of Valenciennes, in the month of

January, 1445 (i.e. 1446), for Jacquet, xx sous tournois."

"Item. Sent to Arras a Doctrinal for the instruction of dom. Gerard, which was printed (*jettez en molle*), and cost xxij gros. The same Doctrinal he returned to me on Christmas Day, 1451, saying that it was worthless and full of errors, he had bought one on paper for xx patards."

Apropos of these examples cited by M. Bernard in his "*Origine de l'Imprimerie*," Mr. Blades exclaims : "*Jettez en molle !—cast in a mould !—what can this expression mean, except that the 'doctrinals' were printed from cast types ? As applied to manuscripts, or to stencilling, or to block-printing, 'jettez en molle' has no meaning whatever.*" We must remember that printing at first came into competition with only the block-books and the very lowest class of manuscripts used as school books, for which it was employed as a cheap substitute. These "*donatuses*," "*doctrinals*," and other like productions, being rude and necessarily cheap, it is not surprising that the printers of them have not appended their names as they might have done to books more worthy of preservation, nor can it be wondered at that they have disappeared, when large books of a much later date and beautifully printed are in many cases either lost altogether, or represented by a few copies.

Thus it would appear that printing grew in Flanders concurrently with its surprising development at Mayence, were not dates much against this theory. In the early history of typography, the dates of imprint cannot be held to prove that the book was not printed later than is stated, but it may be held as conclusive proof that it was not printed earlier. Now there is no proof that any press for high-class printing existed in Bruges before 1470, or fourteen years after the superb Mazarine Bible issued from the Mayence press. On the question of priority of production Caxton's own authority is of the greatest importance. It was long after his return to England that he wrote the "*Liber Ultimus*" of the "*Polycronycon*," and therein this singularly clear-headed man, who had been resident in Bruges through the whole period of the development of printing, and must have been cognisant of all at least that had been done in Flanders, writes under the year 1456: "Also aboute this tyme the crafte of empyrtyng was fyrst founde in Magounce in Almayne, whiche crafte is multiplyed through the world in many places, and bookes ben had grete chepe and in grete nombre by cause of the same crafte." This curt notice has the immense advantage of being written by a contemporary author, who from the nature of his craft must have been perfectly acquainted with the subject he was writing

about. Caxton had judgment, experience, and technical skill, and yet ignores utterly the claims of Coster and his followers. On the other hand it would seem that, though printing spread through Europe from Mayence, the very man, who, until recently, was supposed to have instructed Caxton in the mysteries of typography, ascribed the first invention of movable types to the Dutch. The account of printing as narrated by Ulric Zel of Cologne to the anonymous writer of the "Cologne Chronicle" in 1499, is as follows: "In the year of our Lord 1450, which was a golden year, then men began to print, and the first book printed was a Bible in Latin, and it was printed in a larger character than that with which we now print mass-books. Item. Although the art was discovered at Mayence first in the manner in which it is now commonly used, yet the first example of it was found in Holland in the donatuses which were before printed there. And thence is derived the beginning of this art, and it is more masterly and subtle than the ancient manner was, and by far more ingenious. Item. From Mayence the before-mentioned art at first came to Cologne, thence to Strasbourg, thence to Venice. The beginning and progress of the before-mentioned art was told me by that worthy man Master Ulrich Tzell of Hainault, printer at

Cologne in the present year 1499, by whom the before-mentioned art is come to Cologne."

Guttenburg, Fust, and Schaeffer set a noble example to their followers. As Hallam puts it : "The high-minded inventors of this great art tried at the very outset so bold a flight as the printing an entire Bible, and executed it with astonishing success. It was Minerva leaping on earth in her divine strength and radiant armour, ready at the moment of her nativity to subdue and destroy her enemies." With every deference to the author of "The Middle Ages," the writer sees no reason to believe that the Mazarine Bible is the work of a 'prentice hand. Gradual improvement had been made from the small donatuses and doctrinals circulated in Holland, and the partners in the Mayence press must have been at work ten years, at least, before the famous Bible was produced, admitting the authenticity of the entry in the copy in the Paris library, importing that it was completed in binding and illuminating at Mayence on the Feast of the Assumption, 1456. This Bible can hardly be called rare, as, since its discovery in the library of Cardinal Mazarin in the middle of the last century, at least twenty copies have turned up in private libraries. It is a sumptuous book. The majority of the copies are on vellum, printed with strong, black, and handsome characters, very superior to any work produced by

Caxton, although he did not begin printing till twenty years later. The reason for this costly style of production is to be found in the desire of the early printers to rival the beautiful work of the transcribers and illuminators. They held themselves bound to produce beautiful as well as legible work, and many of them suffered severely for their ambition. In 1472, Sweynheim and Dannartz, who set up their press in the monastery of Subiaco, are found presenting a petition to Sixtus the Fourth, wherein they complain of their poverty, brought on by printing so many works that they could not sell. They had devoted themselves almost entirely to classical literature, and had printed altogether between twelve and thirteen thousand copies.

The first reduction in price by printing is said to have been four-fifths, and the desire for books, not in the learned languages, increased enormously. Printers were enabled to stipulate for advantageous terms on settling in a city. The Senate of Venice granted an exclusive privilege to John of Spire in 1469, for the first book printed in that city, his edition of Cicero's Epistles. Another instance of protected copyright appears in favour of a missal for the church at Bamberg, printed in 1490. Aldus also secured protection for his edition of Aristotle. More frequently, the civil power came into contact with the printer in a very

different manner. Censorship in various forms, the destruction of prohibited books by the common hangman or his deputy, has existed from very early times. The Universities of Paris, Toulouse, and Bologna exercised a strict supervision over books, even in the manuscript period, but, when printing was invented, the orthodox everywhere took the alarm, and Church and State clung closely together to prevent the dissemination of unwholesome doctrine. Berthold, Archbishop of Mayence, has the doubtful merit of appointing a regular censorship of books in his mandate of 1486.

In the very early days of printing, William Caxton, although subject to the valuable influences of a great centre of civilisation, gave but slight attention to matters literary. When he came to Bruges he had three or four years of apprenticeship to work out; and, doubtless, stuck closely enough to the *Domus Anglorum* till he became a full-fledged mercer. That he was not long in getting into business on his own account, and was successful in conducting it, is proved by the fact that, in 1450, he was a sufficiently solid man to be deemed good security for John Granton, of the Staple at Calais, in the sum of one hundred and ten pounds—equal to at least a thousand of modern coinage. Saving his admission to the livery of the Mercers' Company in 1453, we now lose sight of him for ten entire

years, during which, however, he must have grown in wealth and importance, for in 1463 he appears in no less a character than that of a governor of the "English nation" at Bruges. On entering into office, he acted under a treaty of trade between England and Burgundy, which had been in force for a long time, but would terminate in 1465. It was highly necessary that this treaty should be renewed betimes, and King Edward the Fourth accordingly issued a commission, dated the 24th October, 1464—joining in one embassy a clever statesman and a successful merchant. These were Sir Richard Whitehall, Knight, who had already been employed in several important embassies, and William Caxton, who, as the chief Englishman at Bruges, was "a most fit person." Negotiations were unsuccessful, despite a convention of lords; and, moreover, the Duke of Burgundy decreed the exclusion of English cloth from his dominions. Possibly this was a concession on the part of Philip to popular clamour, for ideas of reciprocity were not familiar to the Flemings, whose idea it was that England was made to grow wool, to export it to Flanders, and buy it back again in a manufactured form. It was an anxious time for Caxton till the death of Philip in 1467, when the accession of Charles the Rash turned the tide of affairs in favour of England. In the succeeding year, an embassy greatly affecting Caxton's for-



tunes came to Bruges. Lord Scales, John Russell, and other ambassadors, concluded a treaty of marriage between Charles and the Princess Margaret, sister of Edward of England. In June, the marriage was celebrated at Bruges with great pomp, and mighty tiltings and joustings, of which a curious account, by an eye-witness, appears in the "Paston Letters." After the wedding, at which Caxton appears to have made the most of his opportunities, came a renewed discussion on the treaty of commerce.

The "enlarging of woollen cloth" in the dominions of Charles having been secured by the efforts of Caxton and his associate ambassadors, Redeknape and Pykeryng—he is next discovered at work translating "*Le Recueil des Histoires de Troye*." No great advance, however, is made—Caxton being governor of the English nation—a post which he occupied to 1469. After this, Caxton is not quite easy to comprehend. A wealthy merchant, enjoying a position of trust, honour, and dignity, dwindles suddenly into a "servant of the Duchess of Burgundy," undoubtedly in court favour both in Flanders and England, but without recognised rank or position. Of the misfortune—for misfortune there must have been—which reduced Caxton to the rank of a clerk or court scribe, no record remains, nor does any trace appear of his sometime wealth.

Did his argosies meet with the fate of Antonio's—or did he realise all that he had, lend it to the Duke of Burgundy, and lose it for good and all, when the rather thick skull of his master was laid low? Whether these hypotheses are sound or not, there is naught to prove in Caxton's works, which indicate a distinct desire to “sink the shop” in the scholar and courtier, the friend and servant of Duchess Margaret, of my Lord Scales, afterwards Earl Rivers, of “malmsey butt” Clarence, and other puissant lords and ladies. Yet it is more than probable that he did not abandon the mercery business altogether. Edward the Fourth of England and Charles the Rash traded largely on their own account, and it is likely enough that Caxton's royal mistress also speculated in a few cargoes, and required his assistance to manage her commercial ventures. In March, 1471, he is found in receipt of a yearly salary, and other advantages—but contrariwise, is instructed to push on with his translation of “*Le Recueil des Histoires de Troye*.”

Whatever the precise nature of Caxton's duties to the Duchess of Burgundy may have been, it is evident that he was thoroughly in his element as a translator. It would seem that he had much leisure, and was, moreover, untrammelled, at least at this period, by domestic relations. One commentator opines, that Caxton's restoration to Earl Rivers's

English version of the "Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers," of a bitter satire against the fair sex, is a proof that England's first printer lived and died a single man ; but many competent authorities hold this reasoning to be inconclusive, nay contradictory. He was probably unmarried while at Bruges, as the rules of celibacy were very strict among the guilds living beyond sea, as indeed were all their rules of life specially constituted to avoid giving umbrage to the prejudiced lower orders. The Steel-yard Merchants had a stringent law on the subject, and probably the Merchant Adventurers imposed a similar restriction. Yet there is a curious entry in the accounts of the church of St. Margaret, Westminster, in which Caxton himself was buried in 1493-94. "1490 2. Item, atte bureyng of Mawd Caxstone for torches and tapres, iijs. ijd.," a circumstance suggesting, that perhaps the satire was included in the "Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers," by Caxton, one day after a quarrel with his wife. In the better known relations of his life, he certainly had no occasion to complain of ill-usage from women, as the king's sister, Margaret, Duchess of Burgundy, was his steadfast friend and supporter, as was also Margaret, Duchess of Somerset, mother of King Henry the Seventh.

## CHAPTER III.

## AT COLOGNE.

THE sudden revolution in Caxton's life brought about by Margaret of York would almost incline to the belief, did not the record of a painstaking life contradict it, that he belongs to the category of those who have had greatness thrust upon them. Having acquired the confidence of the duchess by the skill evinced in managing her own commercial operations and those of Lord Rivers, he appears to have been driven by these eminent persons into the work of translation, and from translation into printing and authorship. From the prologues and epilogues written by him, our knowledge of his life is almost entirely built, for save these and the records of his apprenticeship, livery, and governorship, and the entry of costs for his funeral at St. Margaret's Church, there is little known of the man William Caxton. Happily these writings of his reveal him very clearly as an honest, straightforward, God-fearing man, if somewhat of a courtier. Above all, a man with a conscience in his work, striving earnestly to do his best, and speak the truth according to his lights. The prologue to the "*Recuyell of the Histories of Troye*" leaves little doubt that he first undertook the task of translation, as an amusement for

his leisure hours while Governor of the Company of Merchant Adventurers beyond Sea. He announces his motive in commencing the work, in a fashion not uncommon in his day. "When I remember that every man is bounden by the commandment and counsel of the wise to eschew sloth and idleness, which is the mother and nourisher of vices, and ought to put myself to virtuous occupation and business. Then I, having no great charge of occupation, following the said counsel, took a French book, and read therein many strange and marvellous histories, wherein I had great pleasure and delight as well for the novelty of the same as for the fair language of French, which was in prose so well and compendiously set and written, which methought I understood the sentence and substance of every matter; and forasmuch as this book was new and lately made, and drawn into French, and never had seen it in our English tongue, I thought it myself should be a good business to translate it into our English, to the end that it might be had as well in the realm of England as in other lands, and also for to pass therewith the time; and thus concluded in myself to begin this work. And forthwith took pen and ink, and began to run boldly forth as blind Bayard in this present work, which is named the Recuyell of the Trojan histories. And afterward when I remembered myself of my simpleness and

unfitness that I had in both languages, that is to wit in French and in English, for in France was I never, and was born and learned mine English in Kent, in the Weald, where I doubt not is spoken as broad and rude English as in any place in England, and have continued for the space of thirty years for the most part in the countries of Brabant, Flanders, Holland, and Zealand; and thus when all these things came to fore me, after I had made and written five or six quires I fell in despair of this work, and proposed no more to have continued therein, and laid the quires apart, and for ten years after laboured no more in this work. And was fully in will to have left it, till on a time it fortunèd that the right high, excellent, and right virtuous princess, my right redoubted lady, my lady Margaret, by the grace of God, sister unto the King of England and of France, my sovereign lord; Duchess of Burgundy, of Lotryk, of Brabant, etc., sent for me to speak with her good grace of divers matters" (doubtless concerning woollens), "among which I let her highness have knowledge of the aforesaid beginning of this work, which anon commended me to shew the said five or six quires to her grace; and when she had seen them anon she found fault with my English, which she commanded me to amend, and moreover commanded me straitly to continue and make an end of the residue then not translated, whose dreadful com-

mandment I durst in nowise disobey, because I am a servant unto her said grace, and receive of her yearly fee."

This all tends to prove that the work commenced and abandoned, as an amusement, by Master Caxton, was afterwards continued by him, not entirely to his own delight and satisfaction. According to his reckoning it was commenced in the month of March, 1468 (really 1469, the Flemish year then beginning at Easter), and finished in the holy city of Cologne in September, 1471. The manuscript was presented to the Duchess of Burgundy by Caxton, who was delighted with his reception. "She hath well accepted it and largely rewarded me, wherefore I beseech Almighty God to reward her with everlasting bliss after this life." Probably Caxton thought his dread lady far too great a person to need any prayers for her temporal welfare.

This work of Caxton is of surpassing interest, as it was the brisk demand for it which led him to turn his attention to the art of printing. The "*Recuyell of the Histories of Troye*" is undoubtedly the first book printed in the English language, and it was during its progress through the press that Caxton, as he himself informs us in his epilogue to the third book, learnt the new art. Perhaps few more remarkable instances of late development can be found than that of Caxton. We see this active, energetic

man, after thirty years of commercial life—adorned, we may be sure, by much study in leisure hours—deliberately adopting a learned profession just as his sight is beginning to fail. He was, however, by no means so old as the faulty chronology of books of reference would make him. Assuming the date of his apprenticeship, as recorded in the wardens' book of the Mercers' Company to be correct, he would, in 1468, when he began to translate the "Recueil," be at most forty-eight years of age, and at the printing thereof not more than fifty-two. Yet time had told heavily upon him, for he exclaims with a touch of weariness: "Thus end I this book, which I have translated after mine author as nigh as God hath given me cunning, to whom be given the laud and praising. And, forasmuch as in the writing of the same my pen is worn, mine hand weary and not steadfast, mine eyes dimmed with overmuch looking on the white paper, and my courage not so prone and ready to labour as it hath been, and that age creepeth on me daily and enfeebleth all the body, and also because I have promised to divers gentlemen and to my friends to address to them, as hastily as I might, this said book. Therefore, I have practised and learned, at my great charge and expense, to ordain this said book in print, after the manner and form as ye may here see, and is not written with pen and ink as



other books are, to the end that every man may have them at once, for all the books of this story named the 'Recuyle of the Historyes of Troye,' thus imprinted as ye here see, were begun in one day, and also finished in one day."

This strange book is a compilation of the various stories current in the time of its author, Raoul Le Fevre, or authors, Le Fevre and Fillastre—successive secretaries to Philip of Burgundy—concerning the Trojan war, curiously intermingled with foreign matter. A portion of it was translated into English metre by Lydgate, and either his version, or, as is more probable, Caxton's, supplied Shakespeare with the incidents of "*Troilus and Cressida*." Only sixteen existing copies are enumerated by Mr. Blades. One of these is peculiarly interesting, from having been the property of the queen of Edward the Fourth, sister to Earl Rivers, the patron of Caxton's press at Westminster. This appears from a manuscript inscription on the paper lining of the original vellum covering, which has been carefully bound up at the end of the volume. The writing, of the fifteenth century, is as follows: "This boke is mine, Quene Elizabet, late wiffe unto the moste noble King Edwarde the forthe, off whos bothe sooles y beseche almyghty Gode Take to his onfynyght mercy above. Amen. Per me thoma Shukbarghe juniorem"—the counter signature of the clerk.

This book was sold at the Roxburghe sale to the Duke of Devonshire, for a thousand and sixty pounds ten shillings. The statement of Caxton himself, in the epilogue to the second book, has inclined many excellent bibliographical writers to the opinion that it was printed at Cologne, by Zel, who would thus be made Caxton's instructor in printing; but the great English authority on Caxton considers that he has made out a complete case in favour of Colard Mansion, the famous printer of Bruges. It may, however, be urged in favour of M. Bernard and other foreign critics, that in the epilogue to the printed volume of the "Recuyell," Caxton explicitly states that his work was "begun in Bruges, continued in Ghent, and finished in Cologne in the time of the troublous world, and of the great divisions being and reigning as well in the realms of England and France as in all other places universally through the world, that is to wit, the year one thousand four hundred and seventy-one," or sixty-eleven as he sometimes prefers to call it. He also alludes to his having "good leisure, being in Cologne." This, with the passage in the epilogue to the third book, already quoted, would appear to settle both questions, as to the place at which the famous "Recuyell" was printed. But one story is good only till another is told, and the question, who was

Caxton's teacher, has been vigorously, not to say fiercely, debated.

Foreign writers incline to the "Cologne theory," supported as it is by the words of Caxton himself, by the absence of all mention of Bruges as a centre of printing in the "*Polycronycon*," and by the direct testimony of Caxton's successor. In the proem to Wynkyn de Worde's undated edition of "*Bartholomeus de Proprietatibus rerum*," he gives the following :

"And also of your charyte call to remembraunce  
The soule of William Caxton first prynter of this boke  
In laten tonge at Coleyn hyself to avance  
That every well-disposyd man may thereon loke."

Mr. Blades has nevertheless brought forward a mass of evidence of the severest and most technical kind in favour of Colard Mansion. Of the life of this celebrated man very little is known. It seems that he was both scribe and printer, for in 1450 a sum of fifty-four livres was paid him for a MS. entitled "*Romuleon*," purchased for the library of the Duke of Burgundy. At one time he boasted powerful patrons, but in later life sank into poverty. In 1471 he was dean of the guild of St. John the Evangelist, after which he forsook writing for printing.

His name again appears on the books of his guild in 1483, but disappears after the following year—

disastrous for unlucky Colard Mansion. He appears to have been in straitened circumstances for some years, as in 1480 he could not execute the commission of Monseigneur de Gazebeke for an illuminated copy of "*Valerius Maximus*," in two volumes, without several advances of money. His receipts are still preserved, as is a notice of his residence in one of the poorest streets of Bruges. His printing-room was over the church porch of St. Donatus, and cost him six livres parisis per annum. His landlords, the Chapter of St. Donatus, looked after him sharply enough. Shortly after he finished in this room his beautiful edition of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*—a folio full of woodcuts; a magnificent work which proved his ruin—he fled from Bruges, to the terror of the Chapter, whose anxiety concerning their rent is very amusing. But Colard Mansion's clerical landlords were equal to the occasion. Finding that one John Gossin, bookbinder, was anxious for the empty apartment, they took care to exact from him, as the only condition of tenure, that he should pay all the arrears due by Colard Mansion, in addition to the annual rent of six livres parisis, well and duly paid.

For the better understanding of the reasons which incline Mr. Blades to assign the honour of instructing Caxton to Colard Mansion, of Bruges, rather than to Ulric Zel, of Cologne, it may be well to glance at the

conditions by which the early printers were guided in the choice of their type. The aim of the printers was to imitate manuscript as closely as possible, and, as many of them were scribes before being printers, it follows that they made punches and cast type in imitation of their beautiful fifteenth century handwriting. This peculiarity explains the origin of the now exploded fable of Fust selling his Bibles at Paris as manuscripts, his impeachment before the parliament of that city as a sorcerer, and the consequent necessity he was under of saving his life by revealing his typographical secret. Nothing could be more natural than that the printer should imitate, as closely as possible, all the peculiarities of the handwriting of the scribes then in fashion, even to the adoption of combinations and contractions. Thus the Psalters and Bibles which appeared in Germany among the first productions of the press were printed in the characters used by the scribes for ecclesiastical service-books, while more general literature was printed in the common "bastard" Roman. Both of these have long been known in this country as black-letter or Gothic character. They may be described roughly as akin respectively to the Old English and German text taught at schools. It will be well to keep the distinction between the angular ecclesiastical type—used by the Mayence trio in the famous Mazarin Bible—and the "bastard" type well before

us, as many of the arguments against the "Cologne theory" are based upon niceties of this kind. This "bastard" type was introduced by a famous Burgundian school of scribes. The name of Jean Mielot, sometime author, translator, and secretary to Philip, Duke of Burgundy, is little known, although he was the translator of at least twenty-three different works. Philip also employed among his army of scribes Guy d'Angers, David Aubert, De Hesden, Droin Ducret, De Dijon, and others. They brought into use that peculiar style of writing termed "*grosse bâtarde*," which, at a later date, Colard Mansion took as a pattern for his types. When Sweynheim and Pannartz—luckless emigrants—left Germany to take up their abode at the famous monastery of Subiaco, near Rome, they cut the punches of their new types in imitation of the Roman letters indigenous to the country, as Aldus strove to imitate the current hand fashionable in his day. Colard Mansion was also a celebrated calligrapher, and the resemblance between his printed books and the best written manuscripts of his time is very marked. The same character of writing was also in use in England, and Caxton's types bear a clear resemblance to the handwriting in the Mercers' books. Regard being had to the necessity for printing in a character "readily understood" of the people, the severe criticism of Dibdin appears somewhat ridiculous. The learned

bibliographer complains of Caxton for not using Roman type, forgetting that those who read the productions of the Westminster press were accustomed to the "bastard" alphabet. One other peculiarity of early printers deserves notice, and is valuable as affording an infallible index of priority of production. At first the trick of "spacing out" was unknown, and the lines were therefore of unequal length, as in manuscripts, wherein the writer, being unable to forecast the space between the words, leaves perforce a ragged edge at the right hand of a page. For a while this exact imitation of a manuscript was accepted as perfect, but the eye of the printer soon became sufficiently educated to demand the more perfect exactitude attained by "short spacing" or "spacing out." By amateurs of typography, this fact must be ever borne in mind, as—of the productions of the same printer—those specimens must be earliest in date which have lines of varying length. All these minute particulars are important, as early specimens of typography are frequently without date or place, and, from the absence of title-page, afford no guide to their authorship, save the internal evidence just referred to.

Mr. Blades has divided the types used by Caxton into six periods, or several founts, and refers the first of these—that used in the "Recuyell," for instance—to Belgian origin; and combats vigorously the

notion that any of Caxton's early productions could have been printed at Cologne. It requires no specially educated eye to detect the similarity of Caxton's first type and the "grosse bâtarde" of Colard Mansion. And this being established, Mr. Blades proceeds: "In no respect can any typographical connection between the known productions of Zel's press and these Flemish-looking books be traced. Ulric Zel is never known to have used bâtarde cut types, nor was his paper of the same manufacture as that found in the books under discussion. He printed, from an early period, two pages at a time, whereas the "Recuyell" was printed page by page, as were the works of Mansion, who even made a separate working of his woodcuts. Caxton, even when using the quarto size, cut his paper into half-sheets, and then, as with folios, printed in single pages. This accounts for the entire rejection by Mansion, and the sparing use by Caxton, of the quarto size for their publications, as it necessitated twice as much press-work as the larger size. But the strongest evidence is found in the fact that Zel—after 1467—always spaced out the lines of his books to an even length, and would have taught any one learning the art of him to do the same; while this improvement was not adopted by either Mansion or Caxton for many years.

The conclusion drawn from this elaborate argu-



ment is, that Zel's customs were learnt in the Mayence school ; while the printer of the books in Caxton's No. 1 type was instructed in the Dutch school, of which Mansion was probably a pupil, and which from its comparative rudeness may perhaps have had an independent origin among the workmen of Coster himself ; and that had Caxton studied under Zel, he would hardly have reverted to the primitive customs of typography.

Against this powerful position it can only be advanced that Caxton unquestionably finished his work (the translation at least) at Cologne, and that, as a man of business, he would hardly have chosen the imperfect instead of the perfect, save—and this proviso is important—for the greater convenience of having his work done under his own eye at Bruges.

Abroad, either at Bruges or elsewhere, was published the famous book, which for a long period enjoyed the reputation of being the first volume printed in England. "The Game and Playe of the Chesse" is alluded to in Sir Walter Scott's "Antiquary," in a passage which is curious, as including not one single statement founded on fact : "Davy Wilson, commonly called Snuffy Davy, bought the 'Game of Chess,' 1474, the first book ever printed in England, from a stall in Holland, for about two groschen, or twopence of our money.

He sold it to Osborne for twenty pounds, and as many books as came to twenty pounds more. Osborne resold this inimitable windfall to Dr. Askew for sixty guineas. At Dr. Askew's sale this inimitable treasure blazed forth in its true value, and was purchased by royalty itself for one hundred and seventy pounds."

"The Game and Playe of the Chesse" is a sad disappointment to lovers of the royal game. Instead of being a dissertation on the openings, gambits, and endings practised in the middle ages, it is a "morality," an antique and intensely dull attempt to moralise on the various conditions of human life, according to the several stations of mankind, as expressed by the unequal value and functions of the pieces set on the chess-board. Instead of a treatise like those of Del Rio and Ruy Lopez, it is a dreary piece of monkery—a species of composition now utterly unreadable. Before 1285, Ægidius Colonna, General of the Augustins and Archbishop of Bourges, had composed his famous work, "*De Regimine principum*," on which the "*Liber de ludo Scachorum*" was subsequently based by Jacopus de Cessolio. Towards the middle of the fifteenth century, two distinct French versions were made. The earlier was probably that by Jean Faron, who translated it literally from the Latin. Shortly afterwards appeared the favourite and standard work of Jehan

de Vignay, who took great liberties with the text, and added many stories and fables. Caxton appears to have availed himself of both translations, for it seems that he knew not Latin. The work is dedicated to a person famous in English history as perverted by Shakespeare as—

“False, fleeting, perjured Clarence,”

but who, while yet unsuspecting the ultimate malmsey butt, figures as the “right noble, right excellent, and virtuous prince, George Duke of Clarence, Earl of Warwick, and of Salisbury, Great Chamberlain of England, and Lieutenant of Ireland.”

Later productions of the Caxton press—as is evidenced by the lines being in part spaced out—are two works in the original French: the “Recuyell,” already discussed, and “Les Fais et Prouesses du noble et vaillant chevalier Jason.” The author of this, too, was Raoul Le Fevre. Various opinions are held as to the printer by whom, the time when, and the place where this work was printed. It has been attributed to Ulric Zel; but the only partial spacing is against this theory, as the character of the type inclines to the belief that the printer was either Colard Mansion or Caxton, or both, for it is quite possible that they worked together for awhile, in a species of partnership. The life of Jason was

also, according to typographical evidence, one of the early translations of Caxton.

It is well to warn enthusiastic readers against the early volumes of the Bruges press. The "bastard" type is not difficult to decipher; the English style and spelling are quaint, curious, and interesting; but the matter! Alas! the matter! Sundry human institutions, of a quasi-literary character, have puzzled and continue to puzzle the writer—the more especially as the Athenians once made a notable example of an "old man who went about asking people conundrums," as an American writer amusingly puts it. The polished citizens—of Athens, I mean, not the United States—got tired of Socrates at last, brewed a choice dish of hemlock, prepared a funeral and—and the corpse was ready; altogether an excellent precedent, strangely overlooked by subsequent heedless mankind. My first marvel is the bard, be he Cymric or Gaelic. For my sins I know enough of Welsh so-called poetry to guess at the rest. A few months ago, as I stood on a wild winter's eve in the midst of Salisbury plain, and saw the sun set palely in a wintry sky, behind the great dark circle of mysterious Stonehenge, I bethought me of the human victims offered up, and marvelled greatly that the ancient Britons did not, after hearing the song of the bards, rise in their rage and slay those venerable

impostors there and then, on that stone of sacrifice on which the sun rises on the longest day of the year. My second marvel is, that the improvisatore of Naples—dull and prosy knave—is not flung into the bay by a justly-enraged populace. My third, that the Arab story-teller—dreariest dog of all—is not seized by his hearers, bastinadoed within an inch of his life, and set upon an ass, with his face towards the tail of that patient and sagacious animal.

For these reasons I am inclined to attribute much of the violence of the middle ages to the species of literature produced during that interesting period. An attempt to peruse allegories such as “The Game and Playe of the Chesse,” and volumes of mediæval romance grafted upon a classical stock, such as “The Recuyell,” and “Les Fais du Jason,” goes far to explain the horror of books of all kinds, which might have been observed, until within a very few years, among many worthy people whose instincts were doubtless inherited from their ancestors. The contempt of the “knights and gentlemen who knew not Latin”—nay, had but a colloquial knowledge of the English and French tongues—for the clerk becomes quite conceivable, when one is brought face to face with a mediæval “morality,” or, worse still, a romance. With fiendish ingenuity, the compiler or “drawer out of the Latin” into French, of

the grand old Greek stories, contrived to overwhelm them with the leaden pall of his own dulness. Worse than this, he turned the heathen heroes into Christian knights, mixed and confounded legends one with another, introduced anecdotes and episodes of his own, of such length and irrelevancy that it is no wonder that the nobles and gentles to whom this farrago was read aloud—unable to bear it any longer—leaped up and quarrelled, went out and hewed each other in pieces with sword and battle-axe, out of sheer desperation and weariness of life. Perhaps the very best romance of the middle ages is the “*Roman de Melusine* ;” but even in that the author tells his story three times over ; once, it must be confessed, with marvellous purity and tenderness. But the writer of the middle ages was nothing if not lengthy, and the troubadours themselves must have been an awful infliction. Let any one try to imagine the entire “*Lay of the Last Minstrel*,” at a sitting, with a harp accompaniment ! His feelings will explain those of the German gentleman who (Uhland says for another reason), lashed into fury by the length of a minstrel’s song, suddenly smote him that he died. It is needless to mention that no glimmer of wit, or humour, or fun of any kind, illumined a genuine old-world romance. Fun was left to the Court fool, whose frequent whippings explain the estimation in which his jokes were held

by the great. Worst of all, the writer was incessantly wandering from his story into episodes having no connection with the main plot. This vicious habit of introducing episodes affords an excellent illustration of the tenacity of evil. A good thing—be it a religion, a school of literature or of art—is exceedingly difficult to keep pure; the tendency of mankind being to overlay it with ridiculous superstition, absurd affectation, or redundant ornament. But evil dies very hard. Cervantes himself, who wrote his immortal work to kill the absurd romances of chivalry—and succeeded—is perpetually maddening the reader by leaving the don and his squire by the wayside, while he tells a silly sentimental story, and *Le Sage*—a wit of the very first water—forces those who would enjoy the adventures of *Gil Blas*, and the wild night-ride of *Don Cleofas*, to perform a species of literary steeplechase to escape the innumerable episodes.

---

## CHAPTER IV.

## AT WESTMINSTER.

TOWARDS the end of the year 1476 or the beginning of 1477, we find industrious Caxton in "vertuous ocupacion and besynesse," not in Westminster Abbey, as has been frequently represented, but in the almonry opposite the gatehouses. Caxton himself is in some measure responsible for this confusion. In his imprints he uses indifferently, "Emprynted by me, William Caxton, at Westmynstre in thabbay," or simply, "At Westmystre;" but Wynkyn de Worde sets the question at rest by his numerous imprints, "Emprynted at Westmystre in Caxton's hous," "Apud Westmonasterium, in domo Caxton," "Prynted in Caxon's hous at Westmynstre;" wherein it may be observed that the ingenious Wynkyn spells his old master's name in three different ways. As a matter of fact the almonry was considered, in Caxton's time, as part of the abbey precinct. This same almonry contained the almshouses built by the Lady Margaret, mother of King Henry the Seventh, and occupied a piece of ground between Tothill Street and Victoria Street, at the base of the triangle, one side of which is now covered by the Westminster Palace Hotel. Here



he established himself in the house called the Red-pale or "reed"-pale—red being "reed" in Caxtonian orthography. The reigning abbot at the time of Caxton's arrival was John Esteney, who was elected in 1474, and remained Abbot of Westminster till 1498. There is no evidence to show that Caxton received any kind of patronage or countenance from the abbot. He is only once mentioned as having, either personally or by deputy, requested the accomplished translator to reduce some old English "evidences" into the language of his day. The great ecclesiastics were no patrons of Caxton, and it is by no means improbable that if he had attempted to print a translation of the Bible he would, like his German brethren, have brought a spiritual censorship upon himself.

Over-zealous antiquaries have striven to fix upon the exact house in which the first English printer dwelt. For many years an old building was pointed out as Caxton's house, but other zealous antiquaries—to wit, Mr. Nichols and Mr. Knight—proved that it could not be older than the time of Charles the Second. Nevertheless, faith was not dead in 1846, when the house, as if weary and disgusted with sham notoriety, fell down. Portions of the beams were made into walking-sticks and snuff-boxes, and presented to various patrons of literature as genuine relics of the famous printer. It was

from the Redpale that Caxton issued his celebrated book advertisement—the first “broadside”—although only five and three-quarter inches by three—printed in this country. Foreign printers were in the habit of advertising in this way, so that Caxton merely “adapted” their plan to his own wants. The advertisement runs as follows :

If it plesse any man spirituel or temporel to bye any pyes of two and thre comemoracios of salisbury use enprynted after the forme of this preset lettre whiche ben wel and truly correct / late hym come to westmonester in to the almoner/rye at the reed pale and he shal haue them good chepe : :

Supplico stet cedula.

The “pye” was a collection of rules to show the priest how to deal—under every possible variation in Easter—with the concurrence of more than one office on the same day. The pye of two commemorations was confined to the rules for Easter and Whitsuntide, and the pye of three commemorations included the rules for Trinity.

From the house in the almonry Caxton certainly issued all his important works, saving the “Recuyell, the first edition of “The Playe and Game of the Chesse,” both printed abroad, and the “History of Jason”—which may have been printed either at Bruges or Westminster. For some time after setting up his press he was busied with the work of his patron, Earl Rivers, the “Dictes and Sayings of

the Philosophers." This, as the first English book undoubtedly printed in England, is highly prized by collectors.

It is, like most of the works of Caxton, not drawn from the antique fount direct, but a translation of a French work—a fact which confirms the writer in his low estimate of the English culture of that day. The toil of translation and compilation from the dead languages was performed by Frenchmen, and their books, which possessed some little merit as actual work, were simply translated whole by the English. Caxton, by his residence in Bruges, had become familiar with the strange works founded by French writers on classical story, and confined himself to translating these, and adding prologues from his own pen. No one can read these original utterances without regretting that their author produced nothing of his own but them, and the final chapter which he deemed it advisable to add to Higden's "Polycronycon." When in the vein he could speak to the purpose, and in vigorous English too.

The "Dictes" was first produced in Latin—as a beautifully-illuminated MS. in the British Museum testifies. It was then translated into French by that noble person "Messire guilleme de Tignour, the chevalier," who included the chapter of Socrates on Women. Then came one Master Stevyn Scrope, who translated, not from the Latin compilation, but

from the French of "wyllyam tyngnovyle Knyght late provest of ye Cite of parys." This translation is again interesting, as it was performed a quarter of a century before that of Lord Rivers, and for no less a person than the famous Sir John Fastolf, a brilliant soldier, distinguished in the French and Irish wars, a practised statesman, and a Knight of the Garter, the builder of Caistor Castle, and the real or pretended testamentary benefactor of the Paston family, who, for some time at least, took little by the legacy. Now Fastolf was a man of immense wealth, and, as a collector of books, enjoyed almost a European reputation. He must, therefore, be taken as a highly favourable specimen of his class. Yet the vellum MS. in the Harleian collection sets forth that the book done out of Latin into French for King Charles the Sixth is "now late translatyd out of the frensh tung into englysh to John Fastolf Knyght for his contemplanon and solas by steven scrope squyer some in law to the seide Fastalle. Deo gracias." From this it is easy to gather two facts—one, that King Charles knew little Latin; the other, that so great a man as Fastolf—who must have possessed a colloquial knowledge of French—could not read that language to his comfort and "solace." Lord Rivers—whose manuscript is extant—the "copy" of or from Caxton's first printed edition—obviously worked from "Stevyn Scrope"

as well as "Tyngnovyle." It appears that Lord Rivers met with the French version on a pilgrimage to Compostella. While aboard ship, Lewis de Bretaylles, a Gascon knight attached to the Court of Edward the Fourth, showed the earl a copy in French of "*Les dits Moraux des Philosophes*," which highly delighted him. On his return to England in the same year, the king appointed him one of the governors of the Prince of Wales, whereupon he commenced a translation of the work into English, which, notwithstanding the assistance of Scrope's version, occupied him till 1477. Rivers had evidently some confidence in Caxton's literary ability, as he requested him to "oversee" or edit his version; the result of which process was the addition of the chapter "*towching wymmen*," and an original epilogue—one of Caxton's best. This is the volume reproduced in facsimile by Mr. Elliot Stock, from the fine copy in the British Museum.

Patronised at first by victorious Edward, by malmsey-butt Clarence, by the wife of Charles the Rash, and by Margaret of Somerset, Caxton numbered among his protectors the most accomplished prince of the house of York. "*The Book of thordre of Chyvalry*" is a noteworthy translation of a French work into the rough and vulgar "*Englysshe*," and is appropriately dedicated to "*my redoubted natural and dradde soverayne lord Kyng Richard Kyng of*

England and of Fraunce to thende that he commaunde this book to be had and redde unto other yong lordes knyghtes and gentylmen within this royaume that the noble ordre of chyvalrye be hereafter better used and honoured than hit hath ben in late dayes passid. And herein he shalle do a noble and vertuose dede and I shalle pray almyghty God for his long lyf and prosperus welfare and that he may have victory of al his enemyes and after this short and transitory lyf to have everlastyng lyf in heven whereas in Joye and blysse without ende. Amen." In this dedication Caxton correctly alludes to Richard as one among other "young" lords and knights, for he was killed in his thirty-fourth year—the printer's prayer being unheard. Bosworth Field, however, made little difference to Caxton, then growing old. As Edward the Fourth paid him a sum of money for certain services performed, and he printed "Tully and Godefroy" under that monarch's protection, so was he personally desired by King Henry the Seventh to translate and print "Faits of Arms," and "Eneydos" was specially presented to Arthur, Prince of Wales. Many other works were produced by Caxton during his fourteen or fifteen years of life at Westminster—notably the "Mirror of the World;" "Reynard the Fox;" Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales;" Gower's "Confessio Amantis;" the "Book of Courtesy;" "The Golden

Legend;" the "Histories of King Arthur;" from the text of Sir Thomas Malory; "The Catons," compilations of moral precepts; "The Book of Fame;" the "Fables of Æsop;" "Blanchardin and Eglantine;" the "Four Sons of Aymon;" the "Christening of God's Children;" "The Art and Craft to know well to die;" and a crowd of minor pamphlets and translations, some with numerous woodcuts of very rough execution, contrasting strangely with the elegance of the typography.

From records written by Caxton's own hand, it is not difficult to picture forth to ourselves the aspect of the Red-pale some three hundred and eighty-seven years ago. The master printer, now grown old, is "sittyng in his studye" among "dyverse paunflettis and bookys."

He is sorely exercised this fine summer morning, and his spirit is oppressed by the difficulty of his task. He has taken in hand a little book in French, lately translated out of Latin by some noble clerk of France, "which booke is named Eneydos made in latyn by that noble poete and grete clerke Vyrgyle." Caxton reads this—apparently to him—new version of the "Tale of Troy divine" with infinite pleasure, on account of the fair and honest terms in French, the like whereof he has never seen before, nor none so pleasant and well ordered. It seems to him that here is a work, requisite for noblemen to see, as well

for the eloquence as the histories. He reflects that hundreds of years ago that same "Eneid" was learned daily in Italy, and that it was made by "Vyrghyle" in metre. This book, he concludes, must be translated into English, and taking pen and ink begins work at once ; but on looking over the first leaf or two to correct them, he suddenly stops, and throws down his pen in doubt and fear. The fair and strange terms in "Eneydos" will, he opines, bring the critics upon him ; for, strange as it may seem, Caxton has critics who trouble him sorely. Among his patrons are sturdy sticklers for plain, homely English, not latinised or gallicised, and he doubts that his work should please these gentlemen who of late blamed him, saying that in his translations he had over-curious terms which could not be understood by the common people, and desired him to use old and homely terms in his translations. Fain would Master Caxton satisfy every man, and to that end took an old book and read therein, finding certainly the English so rude and broad that he could not well understand it. Moreover, the Lord Abbot of Westminster has lately shown him certain evidences, written in old English, to reduce it to the English now used. And this old English being written in such wise that it was more like Dutch than English, he can neither reduce it nor bring it to be understood.



Master Caxton cannot make up his mind, and no wonder, for his situation is peculiar. Language, like all living things, changes, and the tongue spoken in the days of Gower and Chaucer has undergone mutation in the course of a hundred illiterate years. The language now used varies far from that used and spoken when he was born. What, then, should a man write in these days? inquires the scribe—for certainly it is hard to please every man by cause of diversity and change of language. For in these days every man that is in any reputation in his country will utter his communication in such manner and terms that few shall understand him.

The difficulty is increased by the multitude of critics; for some honest and great clerks have recently been with Master Caxton and desired him to write the most curious terms he could find. Thus between rude and curious • language he stands abashed and dismayed. Pacing up and down his narrow study, he arrives at a decision. “In my judgment the common terms that be daily used are easier to be understood than the old and ancient English, and forasmuch as this book is not for a rude uplandish man to labour therein, nor read it, but only for a clerk and a noble gentleman that feels and understands deeds of arms, in love, and in noble chivalry;” wherefore, he concludes to translate the “*Eneydos*” into a language midway between both, not

over-rude nor curious, "but in such terms as shall be understood, by God's grace, according to my copy. And if any man halt in the reading of it, and find such terms that he cannot understand, let him go read and learn Vyrgill, or the Epistles of Ovid, and he shall understand easily."

Doubtless, good Master Caxton; the difficulty is enough to try the temper of a scribe overmuch vexed with the counsel of "grete clerkes" and worshipful patrons. It troubles thee far more than the worthy man who is to succeed thee in the Reed-pale, enjoy thy plant, and inherit thy reputation. Careless scribes make a sad mixture of Caxton, variously described as Causton, Caxon, Caxston, and so forth; but this was a natural feature of a time when men spelt as they listed. It is not, however, quite so easy to understand why Wynkyn de Worde could not make up his mind how to write his own name—a matter concerning which, as Henry Fielding insinuated, the proprietor may not always be the best judge. Apparently, he tried and tried again to see how it would look best, as the following selection from the list supplied by Mr. Blades will testify :

Wynken de Worde.  
Wynden de Worde.  
Wynkyn de Worde.  
Wynkyn Theworde.  
Wymkyn the Worde.  
Wynkyn de Word.

Vvynkyn de worde.  
VVinquin de VVorde.  
Wynandum de Worle.  
winandum de worde.  
Vunandum de vuorde.

The morning work in the study over, Master Caxton has time to see how his trusty servants, Wynkyn de Worde and Pynson, are speeding with the practical part of the business. For the protégé of Lord Rivers carries on all the operations connected with the book-making, save and except only the making of paper, at his house in the almonry. The paper—for vellum, popular at Mayence, is but little employed at the Westminster press—is rough on the surface with long hairs embedded in it, but of a good strong fibrous texture and a clear mellow natural whiteness. Rough as it is, this paper is a foreign product—beyond English ingenuity—Sir John Spelman not yet having brought the art and mystery of paper-making hither. Master Caxton's paper is drawn from various foreign mills, as the watermarks testify, and is sent to him by an old friend, who buys for him at the great mart of Bruges, whither the paper-makers of Burgundy send their produce. It arrives in a mixed condition ; various qualities packed hastily together. There lies the favourite paper with the watermark of the bull's head, under which lies a ream, marked with the arms of John the Fearless, son of Philip the Bold. Next lie small parcels marked with the letter P, the initial of Philip the Good, and the Y for Ysabel, the third wife, and the unicorn—the symbol of power, adopted by the said

Philip, who choose two unicorns as the supporters to his coat-of-arms. As Caxton looks carefully over his goods he finds other makes of paper watermarked with the arms of France, the arms of Champagne—used by the Burgundian paper-makers, on account of the royal descent of their dukes and their rule over Champagne—the hand and the single fleur-de-lys—the peculiar badge of the House of Burgundy—the Pope in his chair holding the keys, and the keys of St. Peter themselves.

All these papers are uneven in thickness and quality, and will require much sorting and arrangement before they can be used—but much as they vary in weight they are all costly. From the paper-closet the master printer next gives an eye to the type-founding department—verily an art and mystery, and most jealously guarded. His punches for stamping the matrices, in which the soft metal types are cast, are imported from abroad—the cutting of them requiring no little artistic skill, as the reputation of the printer depends upon the beauty of his type—a fact well understood in Germany and Italy, where the best artists are employed regardless of cost. Since Caxton's establishment at Westminster, he has employed several types varying slightly from the free and writing-like character of the great primer employed in the "Recuyell of the Histories of Troye." There is, for instance, the direct imitation of Colard Mansion's "gros-bâtard," used for the

first edition of the "Canterbury Tales;" and the magnificent angular type used in the "Psalterium" and for headings, the small letters of which are an exact copy of those cast by the early German founders, Fust and Schaeffer, and equally well executed, the capitals being a modification of the French "secretary," as presented in Colard Mansion's "gros-bâtard." There is also the neat little type used in the "Pilgrimage of the Soul," and the "Polycronycon," the quaint angular type with its Lombard capitals of the "Speculum Vitæ Christi," and the more elegant type to be presently employed in the "Eneydos," when Master Caxton has gotten the English thereof to the complexion required by his critics and himself. He will also this bright morning look in on the inkmaker in his grimy den, concocting a very sloppy mixture, and at the compositors, but recently armed with the setting-rule; at the pressmen with their clumsy apparatus; at the wood-engravers, hacking roughly away; at the bookbinders, looking aghast at the heap of work thrown upon them by the new-fangled way of doing things.

The morning's work over, Master Caxton walks quietly out of the Red-pale and the almonry, and hies him to the Wool-staple hard by the palace gates, where he finds certain of his old friends—valiant mercers, who have also lived beyond sea, fellow-members of the Fraternity or Guild of our Blessed Lady of the Assumption, and deeply in-

terested in the stapling and storing of wool. As the sun rises higher over old St. Paul's and the abbey of St. Peter, the gossips of the Wool-staple cease discussing the awkward posture of affairs in the North and the difficulties in Brittany, and wend their way towards that famous hostelry the Grayhound, to refresh their wearied souls withal. Here they are entertained with right good English fare—"turbutts," brought by special boat for these worshipful mercers, "capons, chekyns, gese, conyes, and pigeons, oysters and sea-prawns, with plenty of good ale and wine," the latter costing as much as six pounds per tun. They make very merry, these jovial mercers, and wax so noisy, that before that point of hilarity at which they smash the crockery—after their pleasant custom—quiet Master Caxton slips off to the Red-pale, and after a nap settles once more to work at his "paunflettis and bookys."

Once more we must follow Master Caxton—not to the abbey, but the humbler parish church of St. Margaret close by. In the year 1491 he had undertaken the translation of the "most virtuous history of the devout and right renowned lives of holy fathers living in the desert;" but his own life lasted not till the completion of his pious work. He was buried in the churchyard—where it is not known—the only certain record of his death being in the account-books of the churchwardens of St. Mar-

garet, which give evidence of a funeral more costly than usual :

Itm atte Bureyng of William Caxton for iiij	.
torches - - - - -	vjs. viiijd.
Itm for the belle atte same bureyng - - -	vjd.

No stone marked his burial-place until the Roxburgh Club erected the simple tablet in the church of Margaret. Since that date, various attempts have been made to found a Caxton Memorial. It has been suggested that a poetical monument, consisting of a fountain and light, to symbolise his art, should be erected in Westminster Abbey, and that an iron statue should be dedicated to him. For some unexplained reason, these attempts failed to rouse the sympathy of a public, keenly appreciative otherwise of Caxton's services to his country and mankind. There is one objection to a statue of Caxton which appears difficult to get over. There is no extant portrait of England's first printer. That accepted as his by Lord Orford is based on the small defaced vignette in the manuscript of "The Dictes and Sayings" at Lambeth Palace. King Edward the Fourth is represented on his throne, with the young Prince of Wales—to whom Lord Rivers was tutor—standing by his side; there are two kneeling figures, one of which, Lord Rivers, is presenting to the king a copy of his own translation. The other, assumed by Lord Orford to be Caxton, is the portrait of an ecclesiastic, with

evident tonsure, and probably represents Haywarde the scribe, who certainly engrossed the copy, and perhaps executed both the illumination and its accompanying rhythmical dedication. The portrait commonly assigned to Caxton, which first appeared in his life by the Rev. Mr. Lewis, of Margate, is like a large percentage of historical portraits—a picture of somebody else, if of anybody in particular. A portrait of Burchiello, an Italian poet, from a small octavo edition of his work on Tuscan poetry, of the date of 1554—wherein it is introduced merely as an illustration of a Florentine with the “capuchin” and “becca,” the turban cap with a streamer—was copied by Faithhorn for Sir Hans Sloane as the portrait of Caxton; one more proof that a demand will generally create a supply. Lewis improved upon his predecessor by adding a thick beard to Burchiello’s chin, and otherwise altering his character, and in this form the Italian poet made his appearance upon copper as Caxton. A statue, then, is happily out of the question.



## ODD MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT.

---

BEARING carefully in mind the privilege of Parliament, I am yet tempted by recent events to evoke from the shadows of the past the ghosts of those quaint and singular, if often brave and accomplished men, who have, from time to time, contributed, by their peculiarities, to the astonishment or amusement of the House of Commons, and of the nation at large. Many figures, which loom large and god-like through the mist of history, reveal a host of very human oddities when looked at through the spectacles kindly transmitted to us by their contemporaries. The great Pitt, in his latter days, wears a curiously histrionic aspect ; Pitt the Second, "renowned for ruining Great Britain gratis," appears as "the boy ;" Lord Bath as the thoughtless politician who allowed himself to be "kicked up into the Lords ;" and the courtly Chesterfield as a rash youth indulging in a stump oration. At one period the deliberations of the Commons were pervaded by the fumes of tobacco, at another they were illumined

by the inspiration of wine. In the days of Lord North, honourable members went down to the House in court suits, orders and ribands—blue and red—to-day a seedy overcoat and a shocking bad hat may veil the majestic proportions of a cabinet minister.

Fortunately for the country, a large majority of the House has, at all times, been composed of those whom I may not irreverently call the Great Inarticulates.

Single-speech Hamilton waited for a whole year before he delivered that famous oration which has immortalised him ; but he was not possessed of the patience of Hare, the friend of Fox. The latter famous speaker, when congratulated on the effect of a splendid speech, would say, quietly, "Wait till you hear Hare"—who had been his old school-fellow at Eton, and whose brilliant rhetoric was expected to throw even Fox into the shade ; but Hare never started from his "form." Another Etonian celebrity, Bobus Smith, made an effort, but halted, stammered, and broke down badly—hopelessly mute for the future. The immortal Gibbon was at first not disinclined to become a talking member, and wrote, "If my confidence was equal to my eloquence, and my eloquence to my knowledge, perhaps I might make no very intolerable speaker. At all

events I shall try to expose myself. ‘*Semper ego auditor tantum, nunquamne reponam ;*’” but this ardour soon cooled down. In plain language, the historian of the “Decline and Fall” allowed himself to be crowded out by the Noisy Emptinesses. “There was an inundation of speakers—young speakers in every sense of the word—that neither Lord George Germaine nor myself could find room for a single word.” Later on he despaired. “As yet I have been mute. In the course of our American affairs I have sometimes had a wish to speak ; but, though I felt tolerably prepared as to the matter, I dreaded to expose myself in the manner, and remained in my seat, safe but inglorious ; upon the whole, though, I still believe I shall try. I doubt whether nature—not that in some instances I am ungrateful—has given me the talents of an orator, and I feel that I came into Parliament much too late to exert them.” At the period referred to, Gibbon was thirty-seven, and soon after gave up all hope of speaking in the House. “Isaac Hawkins Browne,” said Doctor Johnson, “one of the first wits in this country, got into Parliament and never opened his mouth.” “For my own part,” saith Boswell, with his usual pragmatism, “I think it is more disgraceful never to try to speak than to try and fail, as it is more disgraceful not to fight than to fight and be beaten.”

The vice of the present day is certainly neither shyness nor brevity. On subjects of comparatively slight importance parliamentary orators dilate at unreasonable length. There is a good rule against this insufferable prolixity: "If any one speak too long and speak within the matter, he may not be cut off; but if he be long and out of the matter, then may the Speaker gently admonish him of the shortness of the time or the business of the House, and pray him to make as short as he may." But, unhappily, this rule has fallen into desuetude, and the House has now no practical remedy but a count out, and the defensive laws against reading a written speech or speaking in a sitting posture. The necessity of the practice of counting out is shown in several remarkable instances. On one occasion an unmerciful orator, haranguing to empty benches, whispered to a friend, "I am speaking to posterity." "If you go on at this rate," replied the friend, "you will see your audience before you." It is recorded of Hartley, the most prosaic and "everlasting" of speakers, that Mr. Jenkinson left the House as he rose to speak, rode to Wimbledon, dined, rode back, and found the unconscionable talker still prosing on to a select and patient few. On another occasion, when he had all but cleared the House, and wished some clause in the Riot Act to be read, "You have read it already," exclaimed

Burke ; " the mob is dispersed." Curiously enough, Burke was himself so outrageous an offender in this direction that he was nicknamed " the dinner-bell "—so promptly were honourable members affected by the fine rich brogue in which he poured out his eloquent periods and multitudinous, if sometimes rather mixed, metaphors.

At the present date, when men are content to remain at school till they are nearly a quarter of a century old, it is curious to find that previously to the Act passed shortly after the Revolution, the House was inundated by members whose excessive youth gave great umbrage to the surly Puritans. By this statute, the election of all members not of full age is rendered null and void. The Convention must have been of mature age, eight years having elapsed since the last of Charles the Second's Parliaments, as none were convened but those who had sat in the Parliaments of that and the preceding reign. Thus was carried out, on the final expulsion of the Stuarts, a measure earnestly desired by the first of that line, who cautioned Parliament of the ill effect of the House being supplied with " young and inexperienced men, that are not ripe and mature for so grave a council." This counsel was repeated by Charles, but there is little doubt that both father and son were actuated—not by a hatred of youth and inexperience—but by a kingly horror of that

freedom, not to say license of speech, in which the younger members were prone to indulge. In the tenth year of King James, there was an account taken of forty gentlemen, not above twenty years of age, and some not exceeding sixteen, which moved Recorder Martin to deliver himself as follows : " It was the ancient custom for old men to make laws for young men ; but now the case is altered, and children are elected into the great council of the nation, who come to invade and invert nature, and to enact laws to govern their fathers." At a later date, Prynne and other Puritan elders of the sourest type observed that " Parliament was not a place to enter whelps in." In spite of these growls, many young men sat during the Commonwealth, one of whom stood up and " told a story of Cain and Abel, and made a speech, nobody knew to what purpose ;" but the honour of youth was well maintained by Lord Falkland, whose admission, in 1658, was violently opposed by some on the ground that he had not " sown his wild oats." He replied, promptly, " If I have not, I may sow them in this House, where there are plenty of geese to pick them up." Other young men triumphantly vindicated the truth that whatever may be the case with wisdom, oratory flourishes better in the green tree than in the dry. Waller, not only an admirable poet, but a brilliant speaker, drew thunders of applause from the House

before he was seventeen ; and the first Lord Shaftesbury swayed his audience with irresistible power at the age of nineteen. In some cases, no doubt, honourable members were very young. James Herbert sat in the Pensioners' Parliament at the age of fifteen ; and Lord Torrington is said to have been but fourteen when he took part in a debate. These extreme cases probably helped to bring about the 7th of William III. ; but for a long while after the Act was passed, members were admitted who were certainly under age. The famous Lord Chesterfield, then Lord Stanhope, was undoubtedly elected when he was not of full age, and certainly gave slight promise of his future career in the oration which he had studied for a month beforehand. Attacking the Oxford ministry, he declared that " he never wished to spill the blood of any of his countrymen, *much less the blood of any nobleman*, but that he was persuaded the safety of his country required that examples should be made of those who had betrayed it in so infamous a manner." This violent onslaught was met in the most strategic manner by the opposite party, of whom the Duke of Ormond was the personage mainly pointed at. As soon as Stanhope had done speaking, he was called aside, complimented, and told that he was under age, but that there was no disposition to expose him, unless he attempted to vote. Lord Stanhope, who knew

that he had exposed himself to a penalty of five hundred pounds, made no reply but a low bow, quitted the House directly, and went to Paris.

Similar indulgence is said to have been shown to Fox, who was smuggled into the House at nineteen. St. John, Pulteney, Windham, Charles Townshend, the two Pitts, Sheridan, Grey, Canning, Brougham, Peel, and Stanley, all trod the arena of debate in the flush of manhood. Lawyers excepted, Burke is the only instance of an orator of the first rank who did not gain a seat till thirty-six. It is true that Mr. Bright nearly approached that age, being thirty-three when he was returned for Durham; but his training during the Anti-Corn-Law agitation had already developed his extraordinary oratorical power.

The duty of keeping orators, young and old, within the proper bounds of good behaviour has not infrequently proved a difficult task. One of the tremendous bolts launched by the Speaker against an unruly member is the threat that he will name him. Arthur Onslow used to fulminate in the deepest baritone, "Order, sir; I will name you presently; order, order; I will name you." On one occasion an inquisitive rebel, using the privilege of a very young member, asked him what would actually be the consequence if the Speaker should name him. The Speaker, after a grave pause, replied in a spirit of



solemn fun, "The Lord in Heaven only knows." Mr. Fuller, the member for Southampton, found out to his cost what was the consequence of being "named." Entering the House in a very "after-dinner" state, this humorous gentleman, in a stage whisper, compared the Speaker in his wig to an owl in an ivy-bush. Some say that he called upon him for a song. The unhappy Fuller was at once "named," and handed over to the sergeant. The next day the Speaker, Charles Abbott, administered a severe and dignified rebuke to the culprit.

Few more eccentric members ever sat in the House of Commons than that Mr. Asgill, who, in 1707, underwent the doom of expulsion. This Asgill was a lawyer of sharp practice and unenviable notoriety, and was patronised in early life by Dr. Barebones, a famous projector of the period, who built the New Square of Lincoln's Inn. In Barebones's will Asgill was nominated his executor and residuary legatee, upon the express condition that he would pay none of the testator's debts. The excellent executor proved thoroughly equal to the trust reposed in him. Summoning the creditors together in Lincoln's Inn Hall, he there, with proper gravity, read aloud to them the will, concluding, "You have heard, gentlemen, the deceased's testament; I will religiously fulfil the wishes of the dead." In those days of imprisonment for debt and

easy arrest, his power might have proved unequal to his honest inclination, had not all difficulties been provided for. Dr. Barebones had secured the borough of Bramber by purchasing the whole street; and as Asgill became the owner of the town on his death, he had canvassed, with success, the votes of the electors, and thus secured a sanctuary which no sheriff's officer would dare to violate. Asgill sat and voted for several sessions; and when the commissioners repaired to Ireland, in 1699, to resume the grants of forfeited estates, he went over to practise as a conveyancer, and made an ample fortune. Now, however, he committed the prime error of his life. He wrote a book. This luckless volume was entitled a "Treatise on the Possibility of Avoiding Death," wherein he advanced a theory that Christians might be, as he styles it, "translated" into eternal life without undergoing the preliminary penalty of death. This performance soon got him into trouble. Having bought a life estate of three thousand pounds a year for a small consideration, he had gained a seat in the Irish House of Commons, but was expelled at the end of four days, on account of his book. "If his work were from above," he said, "it would kindle like a firebrand, and set the whole world in arms against death. If men and women will read the study of a seven years' recluse, they will find it not the most

unpleasant hour that ever they spent in their lives. For this I know, that nothing is more pleasant to us than news, and what I have said was never said by man before." Turned out of the Irish Parliament, he returned to England, and sat for Bramber without objection. In an interval of Parliament, in 1707, being taken in execution at the suit of a creditor, he was committed to the Fleet. When the House met he petitioned for his discharge, and was delivered by the sergeant with his mace. But between his apprehension and discharge, the renown of his unlucky book had reached London, and complaint was made of it to the House. Asgill, who was an admirable writer, defended himself vigorously, but was, nevertheless, expelled, and was just lucky enough to escape by stratagem from the officers who lay in wait at the very door of the House.

For the remaining thirty years of his life he was hunted from one prison to another, and ultimately died at the age of eighty, after writing many pamphlets in such idiomatic English as to induce Coleridge to pronounce him and Defoe the two best writers of our language.

Not long after the expulsion of Asgill from the House, a far better fellow and immeasurably superior writer underwent the same fate. The author of "The Conscious Lovers" and "The Tatler," the

uxorious husband of his "dearest Prue," was, for no personal demerit, but simply by the force of party hatred, removed from the House of Commons. Sir Richard Steele was a provoking opponent in politics. His keen sense of ridicule and his satirical power exasperated Swift and other leading Tories. On his return as member for Stockbridge—a result mainly due to his papers in the *Guardian*—he produced the "Crisis," and a motion was immediately made to expel him "for having maliciously insinuated that the Protestant succession in the House of Hanover was in danger under her Majesty's administration." From the first day of the new Parliament it had been evident that his political opponents would spare no effort to crush him. Harley, Bolingbroke, and Swift, the party of reaction, were for the time being in the majority, and poor Steele was received with a hiss of scorn on his first appearance in the House. In fact, the ability and covert sarcasm of Steele's attacks had roused the rage of the Tories to the highest pitch. A passage like the following was certainly calculated to irritate the Jacobite cabal: "Those noisy men," wrote Steele, "who embarrass the nation in every question with calling out 'the Church,' are but like the weathercocks and clappers of the steeple; the sober and laborious and peaceable churchmen are its real support and pillars. I wish that his electoral high-

ness of Hanover would be so grateful as to signify to all the world the perfect good understanding he has with the Court of England, in as plain terms as her Majesty was pleased to declare she had with that house on her part."

At the moment of the attack on Steele the Tories had it all their own way ; but, nevertheless, his friends rallied to his support with all the strength they could muster. Robert Walpole and General Stanhope took their place on either side of him as he waited at the bar, and Addison officiated as prompter. Steele spoke for nearly three hours with such temper, eloquence, and unconcern, as gave entire satisfaction to his friends, who fought hard for him. Walpole showed himself equal to the occasion, and the speech of Lord Finch created a sensation. This young nobleman, afterwards a famous speaker, owed gratitude to Steele for having repelled in the *Guardian* a libel on his sister, and rose to defend her defender. In this, his maiden speech, the young orator was overcome by bashfulness ; and, after stammering through a few sentences, sat down, crying out, "It is strange I cannot speak for this man, though I could readily fight for him." Hereat such volleys of cheers rang through the House that the young lord took heart, rose again, and made the first of a long series of telling and able speeches.

But nothing could save Steele, who was expelled by a majority of nearly a hundred in a house of four hundred members.

This "most agreeable rake that ever trod the round of indulgence"—a rake among scholars and a scholar among rakes—was not doomed to any long period of exclusion. The death of Queen Anne scattered the Tory majority, consigned Oxford to the Tower, and drove Bolingbroke into exile. Steele was returned to Parliament for Boroughbridge, by the interest of the Duke of Newcastle, and achieved some success as a speaker, at a period when the House was singularly barren of oratorical genius. He described the House as consisting very much of silent people, oppressed by the choice of a great deal to say, and of eloquent people, ignorant that what they said was nothing to the purpose. Shortly after Steele's return to the House, the whole country was convulsed by the bursting of the South Sea Bubble. It would seem that during this trying period he exhibited energy tempered by unusual moderation. A panic had seized upon the House, and several members came to signal grief. Great vindictiveness was displayed towards them. Sir George Caswall, a wealthy banker, who had assisted the Government with vast sums of money at three per cent. interest, at a time when they could not

obtain a loan elsewhere, found the classical plea, that he had served the republic well, no defence for putting his hand into John Bull's breeches' pocket. He was expelled the House, sent to the Tower, and ordered to refund a quarter of a million. Lord Sunderland was implicated, and was obliged to resign his seat in the cabinet. Charles Stanhope, whose fraudulent transfer of stock it had been sought to conceal, by the lame device of changing the name from Stanhope to Stangape, just escaped expulsion by a majority of three. Craggs saw only one way to escape unutterable ignominy, and did about the best thing he could under the circumstances—he died. Aislacie, Chancellor of the Exchequer, imprudently lived to experience the full weight of insular vengeance. Contrary to his oath of office, he had speculated in the funds of the company, burnt the account-books, and made, it was said, two hundred and fifty-two thousand pounds. He was expelled without a division; his path to the Tower was illuminated by bonfires, and not a vestige of property was left to him excepting only the estate he could be proved to have possessed in October, 1718. These instances, and the still more curious case of Sir Robert Sutton, in 1730, show that the responsibility of directors was considered a much graver matter then than it is in the present day.

Poor Sir Robert Sutton, who represented the county of Nottingham, was a worthy gentleman, of unimpeachable personal honour, but was unfortunate enough to become one of the directors of the Charitable Corporation—a company, the principle of whose proceedings, said Fielding, “was a method invented by some very wise men, by which the rich might be charitable to the poor, and be still money in pocket by it.” The innocent baronet had been imposed upon by the artful representations of promoters, and duped by the silly vanity of seeing his name among a list of titled and honourable directors. Being naturally indolent, he paid little attention to the affairs of the company, and smarted severely for his folly: as he not only lost twenty thousand pounds, but, together with Sir Archibald Grant and Serjeant Bond, was dismissed the House for participating in the affairs of the company. Mr. W. C. Townsend, in his excellent “Memoirs of the House of Commons,” says that the last-mentioned of these charitable directors was hitched into rhyme for having exclaimed, impatiently, when the sufferings of the poor had been urged against some change that he meditated, “D—n the poor!”

“Then the lowest deep of infamy,  
A lower depth was found.”



One of the heroes of Pope's famous line on the odd distribution of riches :

**"To Ward, to Waters, Chartres, and the Devil—"**

was also doomed to be kicked out of the House. Mr. Ward, who had purchased the borough of Weymouth, was in 1727, prosecuted by the Duchess of Buckingham for forgery ; and on his conviction was expelled the House, after being required to attend in his place. He absconded, but was afterwards taken, and stood in the pillory like no common villain, being attended by footmen in livery as if in a chair of state. This very black sheep was endowed with a fleece worth two hundred thousand pounds, acquired by every kind of villany. When the estate of Sir John Blount had, by Act of Parliament, been confiscated to the property of the South Sea Company, Mr. Ward joined with the knight in a conveyance to secrete fifty thousand pounds. This was set aside as fraudulent ; but he nevertheless made a like attempt when his own real estate had been forfeited in consequence of his conviction for felony ; but the Court of Chancery annulled the conveyances to brother and son which he strove to set up. Rather than discover his personalty, he remained in Newgate, and whiled away the time by poisoning dogs and cats, and watching their agonies.

Let us now hail a jovial ghost—one who has known men and prisons, but a gay shade withal—a squinting Alcibiades bedecked with scarlet and gold, in ruffles and cravat of choice Mechlin. His figure in china once adorned countless mantelpieces; his health was drunk by the enthusiastic electors of Middlesex out of punch-bowls, within whose depths lurked the magic words “Wilkes and Liberty.” This quaint old shadow is that of a great expellee, a gloriously odd member of Parliament. Jack Wilkes whilom editor of the *North Briton*, Monk of Medmenham, Lord Mayor of London, the liver of a life of jokes and galls, of reckless extravagance and utter insolvency, bravest of wits, and most kaleidoscopic of men. Gay days spent at Leyden, in the springtime of youth, did not produce any more distaste to matrimony in Wilkes himself, than did his outrageous squint on the part of the fair. At Great George Street, Westminster, now abandoned to men of curves and gradients, he once held high wassail, and succeeded at last in frightening his wife away from his table; but there was yet method in the madness of the wild son of a distiller. Collecting around him a hopeful band of boon companions (mostly hailing from Aylesbury or the neighbourhood)—such as Thomas Potter, son of the Archbishop of Canterbury; Sir Francis Dashwood, after-

wards Lord le Despenser ; the Earl of Sandwich, Sir Francis Blake Delaval, Sir William Stanhope, Sir Thomas Stapleton, Paul Whitehead, *hoc genus omne*—he led a free and easy life, apparently without any particular object. But when a general election occurred in 1754, his roysterers were bound to support his attempt to get into Parliament for Berwick. Here the Delaval interest was supposed to be strong enough to return him. All his relations dissuaded him from the attempt ; but, having a wholesome contempt for family counsels, he stood for Berwick, and was utterly defeated, at the cost of three or four thousand pounds. This behaviour encouraged his wife to separate herself from him. His dissipated life she could and did condone, but the waste of the family property was not to be passively borne.

After signing the deed of separation, Wilkes, being now a free man, spent his life in the fashion supposed to become a gentleman of wit and pleasure upon Town. He frequented the Dilettanti Club, the Beefsteak Club, and, above all, Medmenham Abbey. Sneering at the Aylesbury set, with whom he consorted, he yet determined to make use of them upon occasion. This soon arrived. Potter, the member for Aylesbury, was appointed, in June, 1757, one of the vice-treasurers of Ireland ; and, having vacated his seat, made a private agreement with Wilkes,

that if he could obtain a seat for any other place, he should endeavour to secure Wilkes' election for Aylesbury. In pursuance of this unholy compact, Potter was chosen for Oakhampton, and Wilkes came in for Aylesbury, at a cost of seven thousand pounds—a large proportion of which, doubtless, found its way into Potter's pocket. Again making use of his friends, Wilkes brought himself into friendly relation with Earl Temple, by raising a regiment of militia, at the head of which was Sir Francis Dashwood. Shortly after getting into the House, he started the famous *North Briton* in opposition to the *Briton*, conducted by Smollett on behalf of Lord Bute. In this sensational journal, Wilkes made furious onslaught on Lord Bute and Scotchmen generally; quoted Dr. Johnson one day, and sneered at him the next; laughed at Hogarth himself for representing the ugly side of nature; and brought forward Churchill, whom he justly described as a manly genius. At this period he was very popular, and was successful in retaining his hold upon society for several years. The fascination of his manner was so extraordinarily great, that he secured at last the admiration of those whom he had most bitterly assailed. "Mr. Wilkes," said Lord Mansfield, "was the pleasantest companion, the politest gentleman, and the greatest scholar I

ever knew." "His name," said Dr. Johnson—whom he had reviled for accepting a pension, after having defined it as "pay given to a state hireling, for treason to his country"—"has been sounded from pole to pole as the phoenix of convivial felicity;" and added, very characteristically, "Jack has a great variety of talk, Jack is a scholar, and Jack has the manners of a gentleman." The moral doctor, it is true, had one feeling in common with the gay reprobate—witness his letter to Mrs. Thrale. "I have been breaking jokes with Jack Wilkes upon the Scotch. Such, madam, are the vicissitudes of things." A greater man than Johnson, the "ingenious" Edward Gibbon himself, was shocked at the blasphemy and indecency of Wilkes' conversation, but was subdued to this conclusion: "I scarcely ever met with a better companion; he has inexhaustible spirits, infinite wit and humour, and a great deal of knowledge."

Agreeable as a friend, Wilkes was a terrible enemy. In 1763, he put the climax to his attacks on Lord Bute by publishing an edition of Ben Jonson's "Fall of Mortimer," for the sole purpose of prefixing to it a sarcastic dedication to his lordship, wherein it was intimated that George the Third was held in no less subjection by Bute and the Princess Dowager of Wales, than Edward the Second had been by Queen Isabella and her minion Roger Mortimer.

Lord Bute shortly afterwards resigned ; and Wilkes next distinguished himself by publishing a garbled version of the King's speech before it was delivered, and by making a virulent attack upon it. This freak was proclaimed by the law officers of the Crown "an infamous and seditious libel ;" a warrant was issued to apprehend and bring before the Secretary of State the authors, printers, and publishers of Number 45 of the *North Briton*, and to seize their papers. After forty-eight persons had been arrested on a general warrant, Wilkes refused to obey it, and told the messenger he would kill him if he endeavoured to enforce it. Nevertheless, he was compelled to surrender to numbers, was committed to the Tower, and deprived of his militia rank. Wilkes was discharged from the Tower on a question of privilege of Parliament, and immediately attacked the Secretaries of State. Actions for damages for illegal arrest were brought and tried before Lord Camden and a jury. Wilkes recovered damages. His action was followed by the other persons arrested, and many costly suits were thrown upon the Crown.

Nevertheless, Parliament ordered Number 45 to be burnt, as a libel ; and, in the meanwhile, Wilkes got through several duels with success, but found his debts too much for him. Returning to England, after a sojourn in Paris—after protracted

litigation, public riots and illuminations—he was sentenced to fine and imprisonment, and was, moreover, expelled from the House of Commons, on the motion of Lord Barrington, by two hundred and nineteen votes against one hundred and thirty-six. Wilkes, however, was unconquered. He lived sumptuously, in the King's Bench, on the wine, poultry, game, fruit, and hard cash sent him from every part of England—nay, even from Charleston, South Carolina. On the expulsion of Wilkes, a new writ was issued for the election of a member for the county of Middlesex. On the 14th February, a meeting of freeholders was held on the subject, and the result of their deliberations was that he was re-elected on the 16th. But the House of Commons declared the election void, and added that “Mr. Wilkes was, and is, incapable of being elected into the present Parliament.” After considerable controversy, it was decided that an expelled member is incapable of being elected again to the same Parliament which expelled him. But the freeholders of Middlesex thought that Parliament had exceeded its powers, and persisted in re-electing Wilkes once more, on the 16th of March. On the following day this election was also declared null and void. Another writ was issued, and Colonel Henry Lawes Luttrell was brought forward to oppose Wilkes, who,

on the 13th April, was returned by the sheriffs as having eleven hundred and forty-three votes, to Colonel Luttrell's two hundred and ninety-six ; but the House of Commons, following the Comyns-Tufnell precedent, in the Maldon case, ordered the return to be amended, by inserting Colonel Luttrell's name in the place of that of Wilkes. On the expiration of his term of imprisonment, Wilkes was more popular than ever. He was magnificently entertained at the Mansion House ; presented with a silver cup, elected sheriff, alderman, and at last Lord Mayor, and triumphantly re-entered Parliament as member for Middlesex. In 1787, although beginning to feel the infirmities of age, the great Tribune displayed all his ancient fire in the defence of the great Pro-consul. Warren Hastings' accusers had been thundering out diatribes, in which Hastings was compared to Verres ; but Wilkes significantly remarked that "the House ought to recollect that, when the governor of Sicily was accused before the Roman Senate, scarcely an inhabitant of the island could be found who did not exhibit complaints against him. In the instance before us, though the prosecution, or, rather, the persecution, of Mr. Hastings has been already nearly three years in progress, yet not a single charge or imputation upon his conduct has been transmitted



from India." "When we consider," resumed he, "that, while the empire was mouldering away elsewhere"—America had been lost—"Mr. Hastings, by his exertions, preserved, unimpaired, our possessions in the East, I am covered with astonishment that a faction in this assembly should have been able to carry on the proceeding to the present point." This manly declaration brought down upon Wilkes a curious M.P., the eccentric Courtenay, who, after a few sneers at Lord Hood, went on to say: "The worthy alderman (Wilkes) possesses more sense than to feel anger when I mean him a compliment, as I do when I assert that his country owes him great obligations for having, at one period of his life, diffused a spirit of liberty throughout the general mass of the people unexampled, except, indeed, in the times of Jack Cade and Wat Tyler. The honourable magistrate has defended Mr. Hastings' treatment of the Begums, by asserting that those princesses were engaged in rebellion. Surely he must have looked at the question obliquely, or he never could have formed so erroneous an idea. Two old women in rebellion against the governor! Impossible. Nor would the worthy alderman have made an *Essay on Woman* in the same manner that Mr. Hastings did." This odd flight of eloquence teaches us, of modern times, to wonder but little at

the violence of Wilkes. It is of no use replying with a tap of a lady's fan when people attack you with a flail.

Next turns up an unsavoury ghost, topped by an ancient scratch wig picked up in a gutter—that oddest of all odd members of Parliament, John Elwes, miser and gambler. His father, Mr. Meggot, a member of the beerocracy located in Southwark, left him a large fortune : but the influence of his mother, who, though a very rich widow, is said to have starved herself to death, instilled into his mind those saving principles by which he was afterwards distinguished. It appears clear that the miserly spirit came from his mother's family, for it was carried to great lengths by his uncle, Sir Harvey Elwes, of Stoke in Suffolk, on visiting whom the young man invariably dressed for the part of the saving nephew. This generalship completely won the heart of the uncle, who loved to sit with his nephew before a miserable fire, with one glass of wine between them, while they inveighed against the extravagance of the times. As soon as night came on they went to bed, because they thus saved the expense of candle-light. One of Sir Harvey Elwes' biographers says that he never fell in love, for he made it the cardinal rule of his life never to give anything—not even his affections. Young

Meggot, who was at this time a daring rider, a considerable gourmand, and a tremendous gambler, was known to all the fashionable circles of the metropolis, and frequented those clubs where play was deepest and longest ; but his skilful management of his uncle was at length rewarded by a legacy of two hundred and fifty thousand pounds and the name of Elwes. His avarice was full of quaint peculiarities. He would sit up all night at play, risking thousands with the most fashionable and profligate men of the time, and, about four in the morning, would walk in the cold or rain to Smithfield to meet his own cattle, and would squabble energetically with a carcase butcher for a shilling. In 1774, Mr. Elwes was nominated for Berkshire by Lord Craven ; but only consented to stand for that county, on the condition that he was to be brought in for nothing. All he actually did was to dine at the ordinary at Abingdon, so that he obtained a seat in Parliament for eighteen pence. Chosen for Berkshire in three successive Parliaments, he sat altogether about twelve years as a thoroughly independent member. Dying in 1789, at the age of seventy-seven, this queer member left a fortune of half-a-million sterling, besides entailed estates.

The ingenious Thomas Raikes, writing under the date of December 15th, 1832, liberates his soul in

this fashion : " One of the effects of the Reform Bill is, that the bone-grubber, W. Cobbett, is returned for Oldham, while, on the other hand, the notorious Mr. H. Hunt has been turned out of his seat at Preston. The new borough of Brighton, under the very nose of the Court, has returned two most decided Radicals, Wigney and Faithfull, who talk openly of reducing the allowance made to the king and queen. The famous pugilist and bettor at Newmarket, Gully, has been returned for Pontefract. In short, the new Parliament will produce a curious medley."

John Gully, like Neate, and other famous boxers, was a Bristol boy, and one of the finest specimens of humanity to be found in England. At that time prize-fighting was as much a national institution as horse-racing itself, while cricket and rowing were almost unborn. Gully was a singularly fortunate man in either ring. Defeated, after a tremendous encounter with the celebrated Game Chicken, he subsequently became champion of England, after beating Gregson in two great battles. Understanding both figures and horses, he soon left the P. R. for the betting ring, and, as a "bettor, round" with those tremendous gamblers, Old Q., Lord Foley, Lord Abingdon, Colonel Mellish, Charles Fox, and William Pitt, no doubt made a handsome

percentage out of his book. Having gradually acquired sufficient capital, he owned a small string of horses of his own, and having given Lord Jersey four thousand pounds for Mameluke, winner of the Derby of 1827, at the subsequent Ascot meeting, in three bets alone lost twenty-one thousand pounds on him in the St. Leger. This famous, but unlucky, horse brought back his owner some of his money the following year ; but this severe experience was only the prelude to the victories of Margrave in the Leger, Mendicant in the Oaks, the Hermit in the "Guineas," and of Pyrrhus the First and Andover in the Derby.

In the agitation which preceded the passing of the first Reform Bill, Mr. Gully, who then resided at Ackworth, near Pontefract, took an active part, and being accused of having spoken too strongly on the dictation practised by Lord Mexborough on the electors of Pontefract—wherein he was wide of the mark—he consented to stand in opposition to him for the borough, and was triumphantly returned for the first Reformed Parliament, and also sat in the second one. But the late hours of St. Stephen's were ill suited to a man accustomed to the fresh air of the heath, and the sunlit bustle of the ring-side. The health of the famous athlete, who had "polished off" the gigantic Gregson on the memorable occasion

when the championship was fought for in silk stockings, was found unequal to the wear and tear of Parliament; and, although his constituents gave him a *carte blanche* about his attendance, he felt constrained to forsake an assembly wherein he had acquired the respect and good-will of all with whom he came in contact.

The "bone-grubber" alluded to by Mr. Raikes, was the country lad who, after running away from home, becoming a lawyer's clerk, serving in the ranks, rising to be sergeant-major, and visiting Canada and the United States, settled in Pennsylvania as a publisher, and soon became a political writer of some power under the name of "Peter Porcupine." Having made America too hot for him, Cobbett set sail for England, shaking the dust from his feet on what he then stigmatised as "that infamous land, where judges become felons, and felons judges;" and, returning to England, became editor of the *Porcupine*. Cobbett had a mania for pitching into men and institutions; and possessing real common sense, and a happy knack of giving his opponents ridiculous nicknames, became a power in the land. Again visiting America, he, in a fit of enthusiasm, brought Tom Paine's bones back with him—an action by which he suffered much in public opinion. Burning to get into Par-

liament, he made unsuccessful attempts at Coventry and Preston ; and, at last, having regained his popularity, during his trial for publishing a seditious article in the *Register*, was returned to Parliament for Oldham. The ploughboy, the private of the Fifty-fourth, after a variety of vicissitudes had become a member of the British Legislature. "Nor for this," wrote Lord Dalling and Bulwer, "had he bowed his knee to any minister, nor served any party, nor administered with ambitious interest to any popular feeling. His pen had been made to serve as a double-edged sword, which smote alike Whig and Tory, Pitt and Fox, Castlereagh and Tierney, Canning and Brougham, Wellington and Grey, even Hunt and Waithman. He had sneered at education, at philosophy, and at negro emancipation. He had assailed alike Catholicism and Protestantism ; he had respected few feelings that Englishmen respect. He had been a butcher ; he had been a bankrupt, of a trade which excluded him from the jury box, and in a list which proclaimed him publicly to be insolvent." Yet, alone and unaided, he had at last cut his way into the great council of the country, at an age exceeding that allotted to man—a respectable-looking, red-faced gentleman, in a dust-coloured coat, and drab breeches with gaiters. Tall, and strongly built, with a round and ruddy

countenance, and a peculiarly cynical mouth, he entered the House of Commons an old man of seventy, and immediately took his place as one of the best debaters in it—a feat unparalleled in the annals of the House.

**END OF VOL. I.**





